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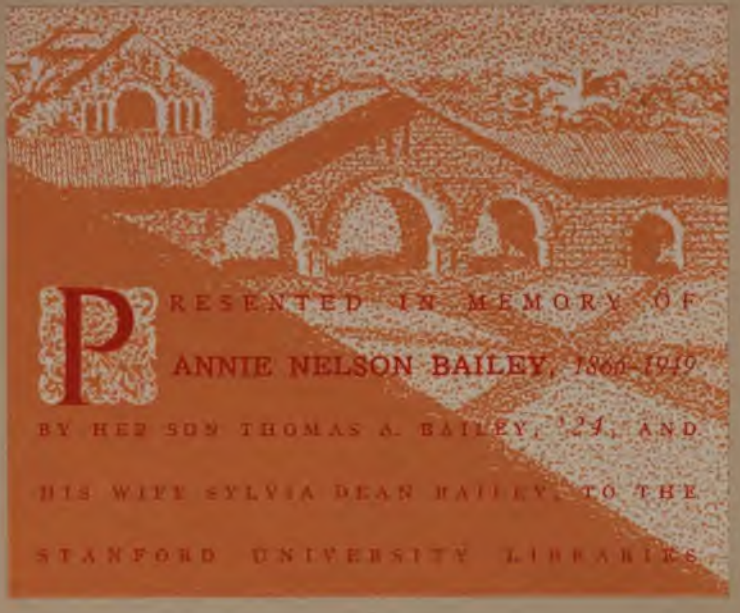
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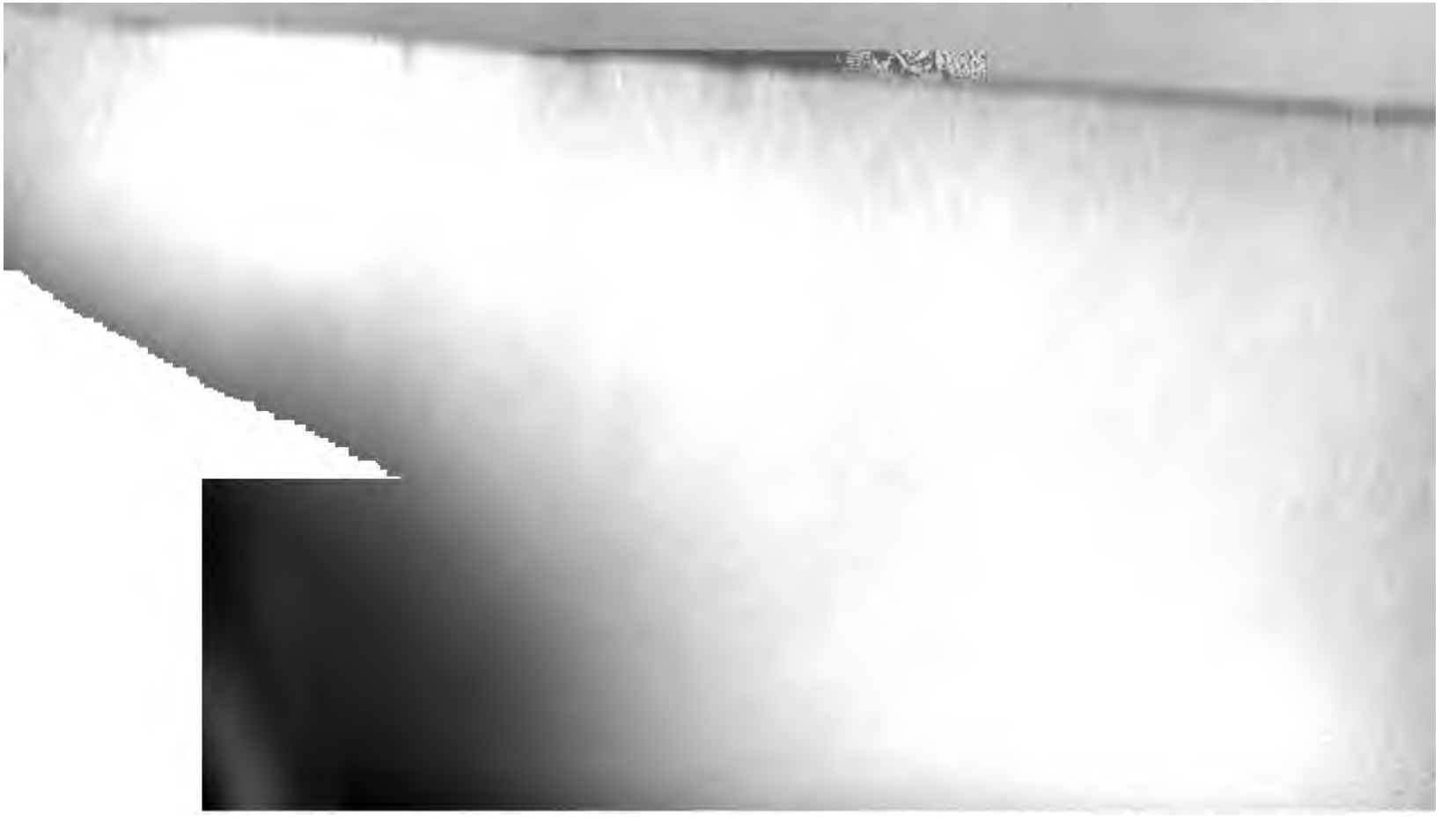

ULSTER AS IT IS

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OR

TWENTY-EIGHT YEARS' EXPERIENCE AS AN IRISH EDITOR

BY

THOMAS MACKNIGHT

Author of the "History of the Life and Times of Edmund Burke," "The Life of Lord Bolingbroke," "Thirty Years of Foreign Policy," &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES

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AT the beginning of the year 1882 a strange contrast was afforded in the proceedings of the two civic Corporations of Dublin and Belfast. On the last day of the old year a poor woman had been shot in the presence of her aged mother at Mullingar. In the South and West of Ireland outrages were general. The strike against the payment of rents threatened to become almost universal. Farmers who did not obey the prohibitory mandates of the merciless Land League,

which, on being soon afterwards suppressed, continued under another name, were subjected to the most lawless forms of intimidation. Freedom, as exercised by individual citizens, had virtually ceased to exist. On the other hand, 400 persons were said to be imprisoned under the Lord Lieutenant's warrants. There had been very serious riots in Dublin. On the 3rd of January the Lord Mayor and Corporation bestowed the freedom of the city on Messrs. Parnell and Dillon while they were still in Kilmainham jail.

At the same time Belfast had never been more peaceful. The two resident magistrates had been taken away to act in other places, and it had not been thought necessary to find substitutes. Sir Edward Cowan in entering on the second year of his Mayoralty could congratulate the Town Council that while trade seemed so depressed in Dublin, and there all progress appeared to be at an end, in the course of the past year in Belfast, fifteen hundred new buildings, with fifty-nine new streets, had been erected, and the valuation of the town had more than doubled in twenty years. "It is, I think," said the Mayor, "highly creditable that while many other districts of the country were more or less disturbed, Belfast enjoyed such exceptional peace and quiet." In commenting on these facts it was remarked that Dublin and Belfast were steadily taking up antagonistic positions. The Lord Mayor of Dublin and his Nationalist Corporation were told that whatever future they might think themselves preparing for Ireland, Belfast, with a large proportion of the population and so much of the wealth and intel-

ligence of Ulster, would have something to say about that future, and that such "a large town, backed by so large a part of the province, forms and must form an important factor, which will have to be taken into consideration by those who call out for Home Rule, Nationalism, and Ireland for the Irish."

This year 1882 was called a terrible year. It was so. Mr. Forster and Earl Cowper were in the spring bravely and honestly administering the Protection Act; but they were opposed by the systematic lawlessness of the old Land Leaguers, who sought to resent the imprisonment of Mr. Parnell and so many of his followers. In the Queen's Speech some credit was taken for the state of Ireland being a little better than it had been. But they who watched the events as they sadly followed one another could see no indications of improvement. The sky became darker and more lurid.

The second great Irish Land Act had no fair play. In the House of Lords and in the House of Commons it was strongly denounced by some Conservatives. It seemed that certain peers wished to intimidate the Commissioners in the performance of their duties. The new Land Courts were represented by them as revolutionary, while the Land Leaguers represented them as really hostile to the interests of the tenants, and at the best utterly useless for their professed objects. These two antagonistic parties were short-sighted. The

newly-elected Irish Solicitor-General was attacked in both Houses for statements, which he had never made, in the county of Derry about promising the farmers in return for their support a much larger reduction in their rents. Mr. A. M. Porter, who has since filled his high judicial position with much success, was incapable of making such promises. In the Queen's Speech there was no announcement of any new Irish measures; but the state of Ireland occupied nearly the whole attention of the two Houses of Parliament. Mr. Gladstone eloquently defended his Irish officials; it seemed that whatever his Government might or might not do, it would enter into no compromise with crime.

All the Irish newspapers were full of outrages on cattle as well as on human beings. The Queen wrote a letter deploring the mutilation of poor dumb animals. The fact of it having been stated in the Royal Speech that there had been some slight improvement in the condition of Ireland appeared to give an additional stimulus to murderous violence. The bodies of an old man and a boy in the service of Lord Ardilaun were subsequently discovered in Lough Mask. There were other murders not less atrocious. Mr. Herbert, the Kerry magistrate, who had fearlessly but not harshly done his duty, was killed, and not long afterwards Mrs. Smythe in Westmeath suffered a similar fate on returning from church in her brother-in-law's carriage. Rich and poor, high and low felt the same tyranny.

The police were attacked in Dublin; informers were shot.

But there were some indications that the leaders of the Conservative party were disposed to attempt to conciliate the Irish Nationalists. Mr. W. H. Smith gave notice of an intention of dealing with Irish land purchase, and on what were called the closure resolutions, and especially on an amendment of Mr. Marriott just before Easter, the Government had a somewhat small majority. The *Pall Mall Gazette* foreshadowed a meeting at the Reform Club, in which it was said the Ministers would be advised to modify their strongly coercive Irish policy. Mr. Parnell had been temporarily let out of prison to visit a sick relative in Paris. It seemed that this indulgence would be followed by his release from all confinement. The denunciations of Mr. Forster became even more violent than they had ever previously been. Though he had almost as a youth during the famine shown more sympathy with Ireland than any statesman then in active life, and had always been distinguished for his philanthropy, his Irish Nationalist opponents had no scruple in representing him as worse than Cromwell had been in Ireland, as the most ruthless oppressor the country had ever known.

But in the North of Ireland his good intentions and his courageous struggle to put down crime were still gratefully recognised. A large meeting of tenant farmers was held in a Presbyterian church at Broughshane, not far from Ballymena, in the county of

Antrim. The policy of the Government with respect to the Irish land question was still highly approved of, even while an unfortunate decision in the Court of Appeal in a well-known case of Adams *v.* Dunseath was regretted, limiting as it did the compensation for improvements independently of the Ulster custom to their actual money cost.[1] Mr. Forster appeared to those Ulster Liberal tenant farmers, nearly all of whom are now Liberal Unionists, as a great and good man, struggling against most unscrupulous calumniators.

Just at this time some verses appeared in an Ulster newspaper, entitled "Mr. Forster at Tullamore." They were written by the son of that Dr. Drennan who, as has been already stated, was, nearly ninety years before, the poet of the United Irishmen. These verses from the second Dr. Drennan's poem may be quoted to show in what a different light Mr. Forster was then regarded by the Ulster Liberals from that

[1] I give the following statement from one of the ablest of the present legal sub-commissioners: "The Adams *v.* Dunseath case, which has produced so much heartburning in Ulster, was not intended to apply to Ulster. But it has in some measure been so applied. By this decision the tenant could have the value of his improvements compensated for, so far as it was represented by the actual money cost; but not the value as shown in the improvement of the soil. Mr. Law, as Chancellor, dissented from the other judges on appeal. Had his judgment been confirmed, the difficulty might not have arisen. The compensation allowed applied only to the actual cost of improvements, and not to their effect on the land." This case of Adams *v.* Dunseath, so often quoted, has been stated to belong to the metaphysics of the land question. Respecting it, as has been seen, judicially very different opinions have been expressed.

in which he was represented by the Parnellite newspapers:

"He stood before an adverse crowd
With calm though earnest look,
And spoke unguarded and uncowed
To listen and rebuke.

"Maligned, denounced, nigh done to death,
By factions, hate, and wrong,
He did not speak with bated breath,
Or smoothly glozing tongue.

"No selfish fear was his to feel,
No plaudit sought he then:
He pleading was for Ireland's weal,
And lives of Irishmen."

The persistent rumours about the impending resignations of the Lord Lieutenant and the Irish Chief Secretary were heard with some anxiety in Ulster, where the objects of the Land Leaguers, however they might call themselves, were thoroughly understood. It was remarked that the announcement which had appeared first in the *Pall Mall Gazette* could not but have come from Lord Spencer's private secretary, who was at that time its proprietor. Mr. Gladstone's Ulster supporters still hoped almost against hope that what they with full knowledge regarded as a disastrous step would not be taken. The Prime Minister was reminded how faithfully his predecessor, Lord Palmerston, had stood by his colleagues and all other officials of the Government, how he had said on a memorable occasion, "Never give up a man who has done his duty."

On a visit to London in the spring, I one afternoon unexpectedly met Lord O'Hagan in the gallery of the House of Commons. The retired Irish Lord Chancellor was listening to an Irish debate in which on one side were Mr. Sexton and Mr. Healy, and on the other Mr. Gladstone. It was evident from the smiles which Mr. Sexton and Mr. Healy exchanged while the Prime Minister was speaking that there was an understanding of which the conditions were an Arrears Bill and the release of the prisoners in Kilmainham. Lord O'Hagan said, "Something is in the wind." Whether or not he knew of any arrangement come to by the Government with the Irish Nationalist members he did not say. A pleasant little comedy seemed to be enacted on that afternoon, with Mr. Sexton, Mr. Healy, and Mr. Gladstone playing the principal and apparently well-rehearsed parts.

The notice Mr. W. H. Smith had given with respect to Irish land purchase, while a committee of the Peers on the Land Act were drawing up their report, undoubtedly precipitated events. Mr. Gladstone was evidently not willing to be forestalled, to find the ground cut away from beneath his feet. On Saturday, the twenty-ninth of April, it was announced that Earl Cowper had resigned. On the following Wednesday, while confirming this statement officially in the House of Commons, Mr. Gladstone declared that Mr. Forster's resignation had also been accepted.

A painstaking and most conscientious Lord Lieutenant, and an earnest and high-minded statesman who had been thought worthy of being the leader of

the Liberal party, had been sacrificed. Mr. Parnell, Mr. Dillon, and Mr. Kelly had already been released from Kilmainham. A compromise had been arranged between the ministers and the representatives of the Land League. It was positively stated that the bearer of a remarkable letter, and the mediator between the two parties, was Captain O'Shea.

Just before his resignation Mr. Forster, in Dublin Castle, received a deputation from the representatives of the Belfast Queen's College. The new Irish University Act was only by degrees being carried into effect. The Royal University, after the plan had been sketched in the measure, was, like some treaties, left to carry out itself. Great jealousy was shown by the Irish Catholic bishops of the professors of the Queen's College. On listening to the statements made by the Northern deputation, Mr. Forster admitted the truth of what he had been told on becoming Chief Secretary. He had not found Belfast the worst town in Ireland to govern. He declared that it was a credit, not merely to Ireland, but to the United Kingdom and the Empire. Thus on leaving office he paid the *amende honorable* to Belfast. Thus he admitted that instead of finding the present city, the capital of Ulster, the worst town in Ireland to govern, it was the best, as it was by far the most progressive.

The Government, it was said, had determined to carry out a policy of clemency and energy. "Clemency and energy" was the cry. Earl Spencer,

it was already said, had been appointed the Irish Lord Lieutenant with a seat in the Cabinet. Two days after Mr. Forster's resignation was admitted by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons, a new writ was moved for the Northern Division of the West Riding of Yorkshire, in consequence of its member, Lord Frederick Cavendish, having accepted the office of Irish Chief Secretary.

There was great rejoicing among the Nationalists. At one of their meetings in Belfast, the Chairman alluded to the sudden change which had come over Mr. Gladstone's mind. Two days before, the Prime Minister appeared to be defending in the House of Commons Mr. Forster's policy: he had, however, now accepted Mr. Forster's resignation. It became known that Earl Cowper's resignation had been forwarded to the Prime Minister some six weeks before it had been acted upon: but all that time the attacks on the Lord Lieutenant had continued in the *Pall Mall Gazette* and other newspapers supposed to be more or less in the confidence of the Government. Many of the prisoners who were called suspects had been confined in the Ulster county jails, particularly of Down and Armagh. Their release was greeted with illuminations in Newry, Armagh, Londonderry, Belfast, and of course in Dublin and Cork. The Unionists in the North of Ireland, however much attached to Mr. Gladstone, looked grave and had many misgivings. They did not believe in the statesmanlike wisdom of the sudden surrender to what they considered to be utter lawlessness.

It was on Thursday, the 5th of May, that it became known Lord Frederick Cavendish had accepted the post of Irish Chief Secretary. It was only on the following Saturday that the Irish newspapers were commenting on his address to the electors of his Yorkshire constituency on accepting office. In that address, in appealing for renewed support to the electors, he stated he was sensible of "the very onerous duties to which I have been unexpectedly called." That day he arrived in Dublin. That evening he and the Under Secretary, Mr. Burke, were murdered in the Phœnix Park, almost in the presence and in the sight of the new Lord Lieutenant, before the windows of the Viceregal Lodge.

On this shocking catastrophe it is not necessary to dwell. It carries with it its own moral. In Ulster, where there was little sympathy with the sudden change of policy, the news produced an appalling effect. In the churches of Belfast, Protestant Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Methodist, the announcement of the murders of the previous evening was made by the clergymen during the morning services. People looked at one another with dismay. The next day as the details were given to the world it was written: "We forbear from speculating on the effect of this frightful murder. But it cannot but show one fact clearly to all who regard it. This is that there is a thoroughly disaffected and treasonable spirit at work, not to be conciliated by any remedial measures, nor by any remedial policy." On the following day in referring to the adjournment of

the House of Commons in consequence of the murders, it was also written in the same columns: "The assassinations were deliberately carried out in order to defeat all moderate counsels and to compel the Government to move with a strong hand. There was evidently the most deliberate malignity in the work of blood. It shows what a spirit is fomenting under the surface of the social life of Ireland. It shows that those who appeal to national hatreds, to evil passions for the promotion of political objects, are calling forth a foul and bloody monster whom they cannot control, and who will make them his instruments not for national regeneration, but for selfish and anarchical ends."

These declarations found general acceptance among the Loyalists of Ulster. Among them there was not a dissentient voice. A public meeting under the chairmanship of the Mayor was held in Belfast, attended by all the leading merchants, clergymen, professors of the Queen's College, the tradesmen, and the more respectable of the working classes. The Catholic Bishop of the diocese, the Most Rev. Dr. Dorrian, was present and strongly condemned the two appalling murders. It was, however, remarked to one another by many of those who were present that only on the Friday evening, the evening before the assassinations, at a Nationalist meeting in Belfast to celebrate the release of Messrs. Parnell, Dillon, and Kelly, a Catholic priest had used the most violent language. On the following morning a few of the sentences reported as spoken by this reverend gentleman appeared, the

very day of the two deeds of blood: "They wanted," he said, "a man in Ireland, but a man who was prepared to go the whole hog with Mr. Michael Davitt. As for Dublin Castle, they might burn it any time. It was a nest of vipers. It would be well for Ireland if it were reduced to ashes to-morrow. They were there to congratulate the suspects, the men who had put their names to the 'No Rent' Manifesto, the men who were gaining the land for the people of Ireland, and to them they were there to swear allegiance. He hoped they would be ready to go into the cannon's mouth, into the jaws of death, even to the gates of hell if need be." The whole audience, rising to their feet, cheered these words from the reverend orator. Afterwards, according to the allegation of one of the Invincibles themselves, the language used at this time in an article in a Dublin Nationalist contemporary about making short work of Dublin Castle had some effect in inducing them to commit the two murders. But the sentences in the Dublin newspaper were moderate in comparison with what was thus reported as having been uttered by the Nationalist clergyman in Belfast.[1]

It was of course strongly commented upon immediately after the two assassinations. Uttered, too, as it was in a town where the population was so much divided as in Belfast, but where the opponents of the Land Leaguers and Home Rulers were in a very large majority, nothing could be more likely to be

[1] See the speech in the *Northern Whig* of Saturday, May 6th, the day of the murders.

provocative of violence. But the gravity of the situation had a restraining influence.

Immediately afterwards the Ulster people learnt that Mr. George Trevelyan had been appointed to succeed as Irish Chief Secretary the murdered Lord Frederick Cavendish, who had been his intimate friend. The selection was received with good will by all the friends of law and order at the crisis in which the country now found itself. Mr. Trevelyan was himself indeed little known personally in the North of Ireland: but he was known to be Lord Macaulay's nephew, the Lord Macaulay who had written so graphically though somewhat too romantically on the siege of Londonderry. From the time the third and fourth volumes of the history had been published, no sentence had been more quoted at the Orange anniversaries of the 12th of July than that in which it was said: "A people which takes no pride in the noble achievements of remote ancestors will never achieve anything worthy to be remembered by remote descendants." But the regret afterwards expressed at the manner in which "the solemn rites with which Londonderry commemorates her deliverance" is never mentioned. The praise is given: the implied censure is left out. Mr. Trevelyan was admired for his courage in undertaking an official position from which Mr. Forster had been almost insultingly driven, in which his life had been several times menaced, and in which his successor had immediately afterwards been murdered. His first duty on entering the House of Commons as Irish Chief Secretary was to defend the

very stringent Prevention of Crimes Bill, which was to take the place of the Protection of Life Act about to expire.

With the introduction of this measure the hollow alliance between the Government and the members who had been released from Kilmainham jail came to an end. The terms of that agreement were much commented upon. Mr. Gladstone was doubtless right in stating that there was in the negotiations through Captain O'Shea no positive stipulation for the release of Mr. Parnell and the other members of Parliament; but the release was implied in the very spirit of the treaty. If it did not mean this it meant nothing. The Arrears Bill which the Government did introduce by Mr. Parnell's suggestion, though the basis of it was framed by the then Mr. Charles Russell, would have been regarded as standing alone a very poor substitute for the Protection Act. Accompanied as it was, too, by the new Prevention of Crimes Bill, the second strong Coercive Statute introduced in less than two years, it was not regarded by Mr. Parnell and the Land Leaguers with the least gratitude. They continued to act on the principle laid down by Mr. Parnell himself in a conversation with Captain O'Shea, and quoted afterwards by that gentleman in the House of Commons: "The Moonlighters are sons of small tenants threatened with eviction, who believe that the only course for themselves and their families is by preventing their more solvent neighbours paying rent."

No Government could tolerate the carrying out of

such a system. No Irish Land Act could be framed to meet such desires. The Prevention of Crimes Bill was not regarded by those whom Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues had attempted to conciliate with any more favour than Mr. Forster's Protection of Life Act. Lord Spencer could not go from the Viceregal Lodge to Dublin Castle without a military escort; no similar guard had been required by Lord Cowper. The new Lord Lieutenant in his daily rides had soon to be accompanied by a troop of dragoons or lancers. He was represented as the embodiment of Coercion. Mr. Trevelyan, too, soon found himself as bitterly assailed as ever Mr. Forster had been. Aspersions were indeed cast on the new Lord Lieutenant and the new Chief Secretary of a far fouler character than any of those of which Earl Cowper and Mr. Forster had been the object. These scandalous attacks were in the North read with disgust, even by the most extreme No Popery Tories and Orangemen who had no sympathy with a Liberal Government of which Mr. Gladstone was the head.

One agrarian crime followed another. Murder succeeded murder. The details were sickening and shocking.

As these horrors were proceeding, the Irish General Assembly was sitting in Belfast. That body of earnest clergymen and elders, who had great sympathy with the tenant farmers, and four-fifths of whom were Liberals, voted an address to Lord Spencer as the new Lord Lieutenant. They had nothing but horror for the crimes which were being committed

with scarcely any determined protest from the Land League, and they expressed their deep regret that the stain of blood was upon the land. "We deplore these outrages all the more," the address went on to say, "because they occur at a time when remedial measures have been introduced, and a great and generous and patient effort has been made to settle on a firm and real basis questions that affect a vast number of people." Lord Spencer was much gratified with the address. He was confident, he said, that law and order would prevail, and he appealed to all lovers of their country for support and aid. In his former viceroyalty and at this time he had the confidence of the great body of the Irish Presbyterians. They regarded him as an earnest and resolute English statesman, devoted to the maintenance of the Union, while anxious to carry for Ireland all desirable measures of reform.

A National Exhibition was then opened in Dublin. At the same time the O'Connell statue, completed at last after so many years from the time the foundation had been laid, was unveiled. A Judicial Commission was also sitting in Dublin trying men who had been charged with the very worst offences. Mr. Gray, the High Sheriff, was himself fined and imprisoned by Mr. Justice Lawson for a letter and article in the *Freeman's Journal* reflecting on a juryman alleged to have been drunk on a trial for murder. The Mayor of Belfast, and the President of the Chamber of Commerce, who had been tardily invited to take part in the Dublin Exhibition,

had withdrawn from it, on the refusal to invite the Queen to be President. As the day of the two ceremonies, the opening of the Exhibition and the unveiling of the O'Connell statue, approached, there was great uneasiness in the capital. Cannon were placed in the public thoroughfares, and the police and military were both kept in readiness for immediate action. Soon afterwards, on the adjournment of Parliament, the new Irish Chief Secretary visited the North of Ireland. He was, though an official of Mr. Gladstone's Administration and a representative of his Irish policy, well received by the Conservative opponents of the Government. Trials for murder under the Special Commission had just been proceeding in Dublin: the most inflammatory language was being indulged in against Great Britain and everything English. Outrages were still being committed with little distinction on rich and poor, as well as on both sexes and on cattle. In the North of Ireland, Mr. Trevelyan found peace prevalent, professions of loyalty thoroughly sincere, and the law fully obeyed.

When he met the Belfast Corporation, the Mayor, Sir Edward Cowan, could refer with pride to the fact that during his two years of office it had not been necessary to call in any additional police or military to aid the local force. In the address of the Corporation it was said, "We are happy to inform you that our town steadily increases, that our population is fully employed, and that law and order are respected and observed, and we have every hope

that with a bountiful harvest, our trade and industries will continue to flourish and extend."

In the address an allusion was of course made to Lord Macaulay, of whom Mr. Trevelyan was spoken of as a descendant. This was an error. Mr. Trevelyan was Lord Macaulay's nephew, the son of his sister, as all readers of the excellent biography he has written of his uncle very well know. The slip, however, was quietly passed over. Mr. Trevelyan was complimented on his courage in undertaking so dangerous an office under such tragical circumstances. He took the compliment to himself, referred gracefully to Lord Macaulay and the progress of Belfast, and assured his hearers that the first duty of the Government was to enforce the law against the criminals whom the assassinations of his predecessor and the Under Secretary had encouraged and not deterred in the prosecution of their work of blood.

There were persons in the Corporation Hall and even among his entertainers who were not altogether satisfied with the Irish Chief Secretary's heroic words. The writer of these pages was at the time absent from Belfast on a Continental holiday. His friend the Mayoress kept him, however, very well acquainted with what was going on locally, and communicated her personal impressions of the Chief Secretary. At his request the lady has again recalled those impressions, twelve years after they were formed. The letter, as throwing a light on the character of a distinguished public man, may therefore be found not unacceptable.

Lady Cowan wrote: "I had a good opportunity of forming an opinion of Mr. Trevelyan during his visit to Belfast in the August of 1882, when you were absent in the Engadine. It was after his appointment as the Irish Chief Secretary. I was almost constantly in his company for the greater part of two days, and, as he had succeeded to his position under very exceptional and alarming circumstances, I naturally made him a subject of somewhat critical observation, trying as it were to gauge his fitness for the difficult task before him. The impression he left on my mind was distinctly unfavourable to him viewed in any sense as a legislator or even as an administrator. He seemed to me too excitable, too nervous, too easily influenced by outward circumstances, to lay claim to the true administrative spirit: the calmness and self-suppression which, by exhibiting confidence in one's self, inspires it in others. As a companion Mr. Trevelyan was very conversable and pleasant, chatting intelligently about books, and impressing one with his literary ability and wide reading in the subjects he discussed. I was struck with the cultured style of his speech in reply to an address presented in the Town Hall; but, though he used brave words in speaking of his future, no close observer could fail to be struck with the difference between his matter and his manner and to fear that the iron glove ill fitted the hand of the man of letters.

"During his short visit to the North, Mr. Trevelyan was evidently suffering from extreme anxiety about his children, whom he had left in

Dublin, and several times during the day telegrams arrived informing him of their safety. He was impressed with the idea that no official of the Crown nor any one connected with any official was safe. I could not help feeling deeply for him when I thought of what his future life as Irish Chief Secretary would be to him. I may add that it was no surprise to me to hear that when Mr. Trevelyan after two years abandoned his difficult task, he left Ireland a comparatively old man."

During this visit to Belfast the Chief Secretary had good reason for feeling disheartened. He declared that while mere political offenders should not be punished, against criminal offenders the Prevention Act should be firmly administered. "It is being so," said Mr. Trevelyan, "and it shall be." This declaration was enthusiastically applauded by the Mayor, Corporation, and representative people in Belfast.

It was immediately afterwards that the Land League, under the guidance of Mr. Parnell and his colleagues, took the new name of the National League. A redder stain of blood was on the land than had for many years been known, or than has since been known. The Ladies' Land League Association was distributing money to the prisoners accused of such crimes; but very little sympathy seemed to be shown to the families of the murdered people.

The Arrears Act, for which Mr. Parnell was never tired of taking the credit, was giving a large amount of relief to struggling farmers in the South and West.

In the North it was happily not required, because there the efforts of the Land League to obtain a footing had been vigorously frustrated. The measure had undoubtedly a beneficial operation. On the rents of the year 1881 being paid it practically allowed former arrears to be cancelled by the discharge of what did not exceed a full year's rent. But the National League met in the premises of the suppressed Land League, and was composed for the most part of the same persons.

The Nationalists at this time were violent in their denunciations of what was called the usual jury packing. But very little was said in condemnation of the atrocious murders for which many of their perpetrators were tried.

Convictions, however, followed on convictions. Sentence of death after sentence of death was passed, and most of the criminals expiated their crimes on the scaffold. In the North the executions and the manifestations they provoked were regarded with much pain. But of the murders and murderous criminals there was only horror. Dr. Drennan, whose verses have been before quoted, expressed the general feeling of the Ulster Liberals and others in "Ireland and Egypt," just after the victory at Tel-el-Kebir. He thus began:

> "O land of saints, O land of song,
> O Emerald Isle of lucid glow,
> Now stained by sin, allied with wrong
> Those tuneful epithets forego
> Title or emblem cease to show
> Of music sweet, or sacred fame;

For now must heavenly records know
'Mother of murderers' as thy name.

"Yes, on thy soil, 'neath fiendish code,
Murder has wrought his fell desire,
With victims strewed the public road,
And quenched in blood the household fire.
No plea, no plaint could wile or wrest
The weapon from his ruthless hold,
It stilled the throb in woman's breast,
And clotted childhood's curls of gold."

These verses with others appeared two days after the execution of Hynes on Monday, the 11th of September. Whatever their poetical merits or defects may be, they may be accepted as evidence of the fact I have so often insisted upon, that among the old hereditary Liberals in the North, even among men many of whose fathers had been more or less associated or sympathised with the United Irishmen, there was the utmost horror of the murders which had so recently followed those of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke, and not the least pity for the fate of the murderers who were hanged.

Parliament sat during the autumn principally for a revisal of the rules of procedure. There was very little improvement in the state of Ireland. It was noticed that the extreme Nationalists had virtually obtained possession of the Dublin Corporation, a possession which they have never since lost. The motion to confer the freedom of the city on Lord Wolseley, who was born in Dublin county, and had an ancestral connection with Ireland, was strongly opposed. An attempt was made to assassinate Mr. Justice Lawson

on a Saturday evening as he entered the Kildare Street Club, and two days afterwards the trial of the Maamtrasna murderers began in Dublin.

The evidence against those murderers appeared overwhelming. Patrick Joyce was first committed. He left the dock biting his lips and like a wild beast who had been caught in a trap. Two other convictions followed. The remaining four prisoners pleaded guilty.

An attack on detectives was made in Dublin. One of these, a young man Cox, was shot dead. Revolver shots were heard on all sides. This was on a Saturday. Two days afterwards a murderous attack was made on a highly respectable juror, Mr. Denis J. Field, who had convicted Walsh for the murder of a constable, yet had signed a recommendation to mercy. He was stabbed seven times. An emergency man was also stabbed in Gardiner Street. On the same evening a sympathetic mob made a demonstration before a hospital in favour of the wounded murderer of the detective. It is a significant fact that on the Sunday between the days of the two actual murders, and while the Maamtrasna murderers were lying under sentence of death, very violent language was used at meetings where prominent Irish Nationalists spoke. Their newspapers too were equally violent. Lord Spencer, who had returned as Lord Lieutenant to carry out a policy as was thought less severe than that of Earl Cowper, had to sanction a series of prosecutions including those of Messrs. Davitt and Healy. This was just when Parliament had been prorogued at the beginning of December.

The winter assizes were held in Belfast, the Commission applying, as Mr. Justice Harrison said, to no fewer than eight counties. Yet while Dublin and the South and West showed an appalling state of things, there was in Ulster scarcely any serious crime.

On his first trial in Dublin for the murder of Lord Ardilaun's bailiffs, whose bodies were found in Lough Mask, Patrick Higgins was acquitted. On his second trial he was convicted of a murder as atrocious, under the circumstances, as that of the Joyces. On the 15th, the three men Patrick Joyce, Myles Joyce, and Patrick Casey were executed. Myles Joyce died protesting in Irish his innocence to the last; but the evidence against him and the other prisoners could not reasonably be questioned. For carrying this sentence into execution Lord Spencer was denounced as a bloodthirsty peer by Mr. Biggar. "Biggar, you ought to be ashamed of yourself," said to him some days later an acquaintance in Belfast.

"Ashamed," he replied, "and what for? Lord Spencer has hanged an innocent man. I shall always call him a murderer. Let him prosecute me if he likes." Other Nationalists and several of their newspapers, including of course *United Ireland*, used not dissimilar language.

As the month of December went on, other trials for the Lough Mask and the Castleisland murders proceeded. It was sad to think on the Christmas Day of 1882 how many men were awaiting their execution for most deliberate murders, and how little sympathy

their victims and their families received from prominent Nationalist and Land League politicians. On that Christmas morning it was, however, published in the North of Ireland: "The Maamtrasna murderers, the Lough Mask murderers, and lastly the Castle-island murderers, have all been convicted and sentenced to death. Execution succeeds execution, and must do so if capital punishment is to be retained in the Statute Book for the most appalling tragedies in which human life is deliberately sacrificed on system, and through secret organisations under the most trifling pretences. . . . . Though the image of a hangman is not an agreeable one at a Christmas dinner-table, or round a Christmas fireside, he will be a conscious presence in many an Irish home to-day. It is necessary that his work, dreadful as it is, should be done. The fact may be shocking; but it is a fact. If it render a Christmas more gloomy than it might otherwise be, we can but hope that there may be light beyond the cloud; that the evil which it is necessary to stamp out even by such means may be succeeded by good."

These words and others of a similar import were read with general approval in Ulster. In Dublin and the South of Ireland the denunciations of packed juries and bloodthirsty officials continued, even while the guilt of the convicted men could scarcely be denied. The new year began with a continuation of the series of executions. Blood was having blood. But certain newspapers and certain Irish Nationalist representatives had very little

indeed to say about the conspiracy to murder which seemed to exist in Dublin and in the South and West of Ireland. The police had at last obtained a clue to the Invincible association, and the preliminary investigations were proceeding in the Green Street Police Court in Dublin. But even while the mystery was being unveiled, and murderer after murderer underwent his fate on the scaffold, it was being declared that no rent should be paid to idlers, that the Lord Lieutenant should be recalled for being cruel, that the Irish judges were acting merely as politicians, and that so long as England tolerated such a system the law in Ireland would be disregarded.

Such language to every humane, to every right-thinking mind, was not only indefensible, but shocking. These dreadful murders were actually committed. They were committed without any apparent motive. To represent them as caused by the iniquities of any land system is monstrous. Not to condemn, is to become accomplices in such deeds of blood. That they did not originate in sordid motives, in a love of gain, may be a fact; but it does not render them from a moral or criminal point of view less atrocious.

The spirit in which the frightful murders of the year 1882 originated is not extinct, nor anything like extinct. Of this fact legislators and statesmen, to whichever party they belong, and on whichever side of the House of Commons they may sit, would do well to take note.

CHAPTER II

1883—1884

Mr. Gladstone and the Ulster Liberal Association—Execution of Invincibles — The Monaghan Election—The Tenants on the Parnell Estate in Armagh—The Nationalist Invasion of Ulster—The Session of 1883—Nationalist Demonstrations at Draperstown—Sir Stafford Northcote's visit to Ulster—The Electric Railway to Bushmills and the Giant's Causeway—The Rival Demonstrations at Roslea—Lord Rossmore's Suspension — Mr. Gladstone's Brave Words —Changes in the Irish Law Offices and their Consequences.

EARLY in the year 1883 a reply was received from Mr. Gladstone in answer to an address of congratulation passed by the Ulster Liberal Society. The Society continued to embrace the most influential Liberals of Ulster, who were not more devoted to the maintenance of the Union than to carrying out a broad policy of reform on their favourite principle of equal laws. The congratulatory address to which Mr. Gladstone replied was on the attainment of the jubilee of his Parliamentary life. In a letter from Downing Street, on the 3rd of January, the members of the Ulster Liberal Society were assured that it was especially gratifying to Mr. Gladstone to receive such a message from Ireland. While the Prime Minister

was being so unfairly treated by Mr. Parnell and his followers, and while they seemed to make common cause with the Conservatives in depreciating his most important public measures, including the Land Act of 1881, the Ulster Liberals stood manfully by him whom they recognised as their leader. They were full of gratitude for the great Irish reforms he had carried out, and of confidence that he would acomplish many more, including a reform of local government. This was indeed already foreshadowed.

At no former time and at no subsequent time was Mr. Gladstone regarded with so much confidence and enthusiasm by his Ulster supporters as in the year on which they had now entered. He had been announced to deliver another series of speeches to his constituents of Midlothian; to them the Ulster Liberals looked forward, too, with the deepest interest. All his movements, all his utterances were by them carefully considered. The Ulster newspaper most in their confidence was called, both by Nationalists and Conservatives, "Mr. Gladstone's only organ in Ireland"; but this, so far from being regarded as a reproach by the Ulster Liberals, was accepted as a recommendation and a title of honour. The visit to Midlothian was postponed on account of the Prime Minister's indisposition. The cause was much regretted by his Ulster friends. His policy was believed to be their policy, his cause their own. Mr. Gladstone had to go to Cannes to recover from insomnia, and on the first night of his arrival was able again to sleep seven hours. There he received a resolution of

sympathy from the Belfast Liberal Association. This followed the one from the Ulster Liberal Society. He expressed his thanks on the 15th of February to those who had supported the resolution, for their good wishes, "forwarded," he said, "from so important an Irish body."

The sudden arrest of the Invincible conspirators, their trials, sentences, and the execution of Brady, Curley, and Kelly, caused of course a profound sensation. On the day of the execution of the most determined of the gang, the recent Liberal Mayor of Belfast, Sir Edward Cowan, said to a friend in the Devonshire Club, "They have hanged Joe Brady. I am glad of it." And so were all the Ulster Liberals. It was to them a cause of wonder that James Carey, a Town Councillor of Dublin, should by his own admission be shown one of the worst of the atrocious gang. "Well," said an Ulster Liberal, "Nationalist Aldermen and Town Councillors in Dublin may denounce the Belfast Town Council as Tory, and even Orange; but at all events there are no assassins in the body."

While the law was being vindicated, there was a check on the murderous conspiracies. The country began to show considerable improvement even in the South and West. But the return of Mr. William O'Brien for Mallow, and the defeat of the newly appointed Solicitor-General, showed the National League and the Parnellites generally gaining ground and becoming more defiant. Messrs. Healy, Davitt, and Quin had refused to give bail when ordered

to do so by the Court of Queen's Bench. Their imprisonment followed.

Some time afterwards, in the early summer, the resignation of one of the Liberal representatives for Monaghan caused a vacancy in that constituency. Mr. Monroe, an eminent Conservative lawyer, was put forward as a candidate. He was opposed by Mr. Pringle, a Liberal, and by Mr. Healy, who, as of course a Nationalist, had at Mr. Parnell's suggestion retired from the borough of Wexford to contest this Ulster county constituency. The result of the election showed how little Mr. Gladstone and his Government could depend on the gratitude of the Irish Nationalists for any of his great services or for the understanding which had undoubtedly been arrived at before Mr. Parnell had been released from Kilmainham jail, though the alleged treaty had been and continued to be denied by himself and his supporters, but not by the Nationalists generally. "The Kilmainham Treaty, as it was called," wrote Mr. O'Connor, "was the most abject and complete surrender ever made by the powerful Government of a great State to the imprisoned leader of a small, poor, and unarmed nation." [1]

The Arrears Act, of which Mr. Parnell continued to claim the credit, was not thought worth mentioning. The Pope, too, had just strongly condemned the proceedings of Mr. Parnell and his followers. The subscription in favour of the Nationalist leader appeared to be stimulated rather than checked

[1] The *Parnell Movement*, by Mr. T. P. O'Connor, p. 484.

by being discountenanced from the Vatican. Mr. Healy had appeared in antagonism to what were regarded as the authorities of his Church, whom he has since, as an advocate in trials of election petitions, asserted to have a right to direct the politics of their Catholic people. The Nationalist leader himself as a prominent advocate of Mr. Healy delivered speeches in most of the electoral districts of Monaghan. As usual he acted with little generosity to his Liberal opponent, generosity to a political adversary never having been one of Mr. Parnell's characteristics any more than it has been Mr. Healy's. Mr. Pringle was a respectable butter merchant. He was taunted by both Mr. Parnell and Mr. Healy with his business, and as himself scraping butter casks. This reproach did not come very well from the mouth of the member for the city of Cork, which had long been distinguished for the trade in butter. It was asked in return how long it was since Mr. Healy had been a railway clerk on a salary of twenty-five shillings a week? Such personalities were much to be regretted.

But Mr. Parnell himself did not escape. When he first appeared in Ulster as a supporter of the Land League he boasted of the rents he had struck off. He asked the principal Liberal newspaper of the province, between which and the Land League there still was a determined struggle, what rents it had succeeded in striking off? He was told in reply that it was no business of a law-

abiding journal to encourage a movement for the compulsory striking off of rents.

Soon afterwards, when the Land Commission sat in Armagh, it appeared that on what was then called the Parnell estate, of which Mr. Parnell acted as agent for his brother, the rents were considerably reduced. A deputation had gone to Dublin to represent this fact to the Nationalist leader: but had not been favoured with an interview. A letter was published signed by several of the tenants on the Parnell estate, complaining of the treatment they received. The authenticity of the letter was never questioned, nor could be questioned. Mr. Parnell himself never alluded to it; but Mr. Biggar, without any evidence to support his assertions, said it must have originated in a conspiracy. The conspirators, at all events, signed and published their names and stood by what they stated to be the facts.

Almost in Mr. Parnell's presence during this Monaghan contest, Mr. Thomas Shillington, J.P., of Portadown, made some strong remarks. This gentleman, a well-known Liberal in the county of Armagh, has since become a Home Ruler, and as a Home Ruler, subsequently contested one of the divisions of his county, and at the last general election, also as a Home Ruler, South Tyrone against the redoubtable Mr. T. W. Russell. In Monaghan he publicly said: "I judge of men by their acts, and I know something of Mr. Parnell in the county of Armagh. His brother has an estate there, and some of the rents have been greatly reduced. At one time Mr. Charles S. Parnell

came along in company with a steward named Rainey, and raised the rents on the poor tenants outrageously." The great reduction of rents just referred to was made by the sub-commissioners. The legal sub-commissioner who presided in the court afterwards informed the writer that the Parnell estate in Armagh was one of the worst that had come under his cognisance. In repeating these statements, as made then, there is no intention of reflecting on any one dead or living. They are merely recalled to give a just record of what was so much talked of at the time.

Neither Mr. Healy nor Mr. Parnell himself in the course of the election said anything directly in favour of Irish Nationalism. They only alluded to it indirectly, keeping it very discreetly in the background. They carried on the contest as champions of the tenant farmers, as in fact Land Leaguers. Mr. Healy, though, as stated, he had spoken in no respectful terms of the Pope's circular in condemnation of the Land League, and of certain Irish Nationalist proceedings, received the warmest support of the Catholic clergy in Monaghan. They appealed to their people on the Sundays in their chapels, asking all who would vote for Mr. Healy to hold up their hands. Under such circumstances the Catholics of Monaghan all voted for the Nationalist candidate. He polled 2,376 votes; Mr. Monroe, 2,011; Mr. Pringle, the Gladstonian and Liberal candidate, only 274.

At the time it was thought that a large number of Catholic electors would decline to follow Mr. Healy. But he had one exceptional advantage. A most

important clause introduced into the Land Bill, favourable to the tenants, was called by his name. He was considered its author. His right indeed to that title was denied. The present Lord Russell of Killowen some time before stated publicly in Belfast that he suggested the Healy Clause, and the claim he put forward, and with apparent reason, was the cause of some coldness between him and Mr. Parnell.

The result of the contest was, from a Liberal point of view, a great proof of weakness. It surprised and greatly mortified Mr. Gladstone's supporters in the more northerly Ulster counties, where, as in Armagh, Derry, Down, and Antrim, they were generally sterling Protestant and Presbyterian Liberals. It was, however, well known that there were but 300 Liberal Protestant votes in the county. The Catholic and Conservative votes were about equal; in the south and west of Monaghan there were scarcely any Protestants. It was the Ulster county in which there were fewer Protestant Liberals than in any other. The number that might have been polled for Mr. Pringle was diminished by an electioneering artifice. It was announced early on the polling day that the Liberal candidate had retired. The statement was placarded at all the polling places. It is but just to say that this proceeding was not adopted by Mr. Healy nor his supporters; it originated in a different source, and was expected to promote Mr. Monroe's election.

In the Nationalist ranks Mr. Healy's return for Monaghan was hailed with the utmost enthusiasm.

They raised the cry, "All Ulster is ours." Forgetting that Monaghan was an outlying county of the province, very susceptible to Nationalist influences, they thought that as the elections came round similar results would follow in nearly all those constituencies. Before the year ended they found themselves mistaken in this somewhat overweening assumption.

But the anticipation, such as it was, inspired them with a determination to carry the war into the very heart of Unionist Ulster. Just after the last wretched man had suffered for being implicated in the Phœnix Park murders, and the American Irish dynamitards and others had attempted to blow up public buildings in London, the so-called invasion of Ulster began. Public meetings by Nationalists were held in many parts of the province, all more or less of a Land League character. Though the term "Invasion of Ulster" was objected to as an insolent phrase, used by the Orangemen to imply that the Nationalists had no right to hold meetings in Ulster at all, as a fact it was Mr. Healy, the newly returned Nationalist member for Monaghan, who first employed it, and he had a far juster title to it in the opinion of some people than to being the author of the Healy Clause. The meetings of the Nationalists to carry out the policy of the invasion of Ulster were most numerous after the Parliament late in August had been prorogued, and the Nationalist members could be present at those demonstrations.

That Parliamentary session, like the one after Mr. Gladstone's first great remedial measures

had been carried, was avowedly not to be an Irish one, and it was not. Mr. Chamberlain at the Board of Trade sought to give Ireland the benefit of his Bankruptcy Bill, and with the assistance of Mr. Hugh Law, the Lord Chancellor, and Mr. Porter, the Attorney General, a local Bankruptcy Court for Belfast. The concession of a local Bankruptcy Court was opposed by professed Home Rulers in Dublin, several of them members of Parliament, acting in the interests of the Dublin solicitors. Belfast was termed a mere rural district by Dublin Nationalist newspapers; but it was then of far more importance commercially than the Irish capital, and was continuing to make very rapid progress, while Dublin, in which so many appalling outrages had occurred, so many atrocious murders had been committed, and so many trials and convictions for murder had just taken place, was comparatively standing still. In the Queen's Speech proroguing the Parliament some credit was taken, and justly taken, for the improved state of the country. Much indeed was required to remove the dreadful stains of blood from the land, but still after the reign of terror in the preceding year, the improvement which had been visible in the last December, was still more manifest in the August and September of 1883.

The invasion of Ulster continued and gathered strength for the time by opposition. Active measures were taken by the Orangemen and their sympathisers to oppose the Nationalist invaders.

The expedient adopted was of a questionable, defiant, and even dangerous character. Whenever a Nationalist meeting from the South was announced in the North, a counter Orange demonstration, as it was called, was summoned to be held, on the same day, at the same hour, and in the same neighbourhood. Nothing could be more provocative; nothing more likely to produce a breach of the peace. Such counter-irritating displays in such circumstances were justly regarded as illegal. Many meetings on both sides were proclaimed. The Government, which sought to do its duty impartially to both, received no thanks from either.

Even when these Nationalist demonstrations in Ulster were not met by counter-demonstrations of Orangemen in the same neighbourhood, they were seldom conciliatory, and produced much irritation. One of these, on August 15th, was held at Draperstown, in the county of Londonderry. Mr. Michael Davitt appeared on the scene, professing moderation. The moderation, however, may be exemplified by one of the sentences from his speech: "We are deemed," he said, "revolutionary because we have seized Irish landlordism by the throat, and forced it to disgorge some of the plunder which it took from the farmer in Ireland in the past." At this Draperstown meeting, indeed, flags and sashes were not encouraged, because it was said there was no desire to give the demonstration a party character. But a number of more defiant spirits, who were said to be Ribbonmen, came forward shouting "Buckshot,"

waving banners, and having bands playing disloyal tunes. A serious disturbance was only prevented by the police, who had to escort these processionists with fixed bayonets. Mr. Healy after his election for Monaghan, and a few days after this demonstration at Draperstown, said: "There is a state of war existing between England and Ireland, which would be a physical war if the people had the power."[1]

The year before, when member for Wexford, the same gentleman had told the House of Commons that he had come from the seat of war in Ireland. There were riots at Portadown, in Armagh. There were riots at Clones, in Monaghan. The appearance of the Lord Mayor of Dublin as a Nationalist lecturer in the city of Derry produced another dangerous disturbance. In Newry there was also a collision. In Dungannon the two rival parties were on the same day in close proximity, and they were with much difficulty prevented from coming to blows. Mr. T. P. O'Connor on returning from the meeting had to be protected from violence by the Rev. Dr. Kane, a distinguished Orangeman, and it was said that a shot was fired at the carriage in which Mr. O'Connor was seated. It was also stated that the most determined part of the invasion of Ulster would not take place until after the visit of Sir Stafford Northcote to the North.

That visit, after having been delayed by illness, was paid early in October. It had been announced in the Orange newspapers that Sir Stafford, as the Con-

[1] Speech in the House of Commons, Saturday, August 18th, 1883.

servative leader in the House of Commons, would land from his friend Mr. W. H. Smith's yacht at Carrickfergus, and step from the boat to the venerated stone on which the great deliverer of pious and immortal memory had put his foot when he first landed on Irish soil on his way to the Boyne.

But the weather turned out to be very unfavourable. The yacht had to put into Kingstown, and Sir Stafford had to travel to Belfast by the railway. The *Pandora*, as the vessel was called, came round and attended on the Conservative leader: but it showed a very remarkable propensity for getting into difficulties, and especially for making acquaintanceship with sandbanks.

Sir Stafford was of course heartily welcomed in the capital of Ulster by the Conservatives. To have a visit from an eminent English leader of their party was a remarkable event. Such visits had been few and far between. In Belfast, and indeed in the other towns of Northern Ulster, Sir Stafford was generally well received. It was, however, remarked that, while he said a great deal about Egypt and the Soudan, he was silent on the Irish Land Act of the Government, which he had condemned when the sub-commissioners had begun their work in judicially fixing what were called fair rents, in the autumn of 1881. He had by his language undoubtedly encouraged the appointment of the Committee of the House of Lords to inquire into the working of the measure in the following session, an inquiry which produced considerable heart-burning, and which, as has been stated, was repre-

sented as intended to intimidate the commissioners in the performance of their duties. Whatever may be said about the decisions of the sub-commissioners at that time, many of them, as has been subsequently admitted by some of themselves, given according to no fixed rule, it cannot justly be declared that the reductions of about twenty-two per cent. were much too sweeping.

Sir Stafford delivered many speeches during his visit to Belfast, Londonderry, and the smaller towns such as Carrickfergus and Larne. But they were too moderate for a large portion of his audiences. They did not stir the blood of the Orangemen. He only once said, "No Surrender;" but he declared that the address then presented to him would be preserved as a precious heirloom in his family. This was scarcely thought to be enough by many of the Orangemen. Something hotter and something stronger was considered by them to be required. He dwelt, too, on the Ulster Liberals joining with the Conservatives on the Unionist question. He was told by their principal organ that the Ulster Liberals had always been hostile to Home Rule, that on this question they needed no lesson from their Conservative opponents, that they were opposed and denounced by O'Connell, just as they were now opposed and denounced by Mr. Parnell.

Sir Stafford went from Portrush to Bushmills by the new electric railway. This had just been opened by Lord Spencer as the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. It has since been extended to the Giant's Causeway.

One London newspaper in referring to this novel undertaking said that it was Cockneyfying the Causeway; but Cockneyism and electric railways certainly had then little in common. From some supposed want of courtesy to the reporters on the part of the manager of the electric railway, Lord Spencer's speech at the dinner was not generally reported. He afterwards himself transmitted it to the newspapers. In it he dwelt strongly on the duty of maintaining law and order. He defended himself, however, from the charge of not acting more decidedly against the rival Nationalist and Orange demonstrations during the boasted invasion of Ulster then going on. "We have to consider," said Lord Spencer, "the varying condition of every locality and of every circumstance as to the peace of the country, and what we are bound to do is to act sympathisingly and justly, and what we can do to protect life and property, follow fearlessly the perpetrators of crime, to make such persons know that their proceedings cannot and will not be tolerated who urge intimidation and endeavour to deprive men of the exercise of their lawful rights and to limit the use of their labour." Brave words, which were received with hearty approval by the representative Liberals as well as the Conservatives of the counties of Antrim and Londonderry. Brave words, which were spoken almost under the shadow of the noble cliffs which look down on the marvellous basaltic formation of the Causeway, so eloquently suggestive of great volcanic eruptions which can scarcely be said to have left behind them any other monument, and

which appear to make the Irish problem and everything connected with it in our time so very small. Brave words, which it seemed to all who heard him the calm but resolute Lord Spencer would never dream of contradicting and falsifying.

Sir Stafford Northcote's ill fortune during his Irish visit attended him to the last. He embarked at Larne Harbour on his return during a great storm. Nothing was heard of him and the yacht *Pandora* on going round the coast. Fears for his safety began to be generally entertained. It was even said in Belfast that this kindly Conservative statesman was lost. Nearly two days passed away before there was any news of him, after he had left the harbour on Monday the 15th of October, and was understood to have sailed to Dundrum Bay, on visits to Lord Roden and Lord Annesley. The yacht had been driven into Donaghadee.

For a few days during Sir Stafford Northcote's visit the invasion of Ulster was professedly at least suspended. It broke out again immediately after he left. The most important of all those demonstrations and counter-demonstrations was held at Roslea, a small village on the outskirts of Fermanagh and Monaghan. This demonstration was represented as the beginning of another series. A counter Orange demonstration was immediately organised. A placard of a somewhat violent character was issued by Lord Rossmore, with the initials of G. M. as Grand Master after "Rossmore." It called on the Orangemen to assemble in their thousands to counteract the efforts

of the rebellious party. The two factions came near each other at the village, which was occupied, however, by a considerable military force. One of them was kept at the other side of the river. Lord Rossmore's speech was as little moderate as his placard. He was represented as saying, that the Nationalists on the hill were rebels and scavengers, whom the Orangemen could easily vanquish, and that the Brethren could also, if they thought fit, eat up the handful of soldiers in a few seconds.

The parties were with the utmost difficulty prevented from coming into collision. Revolver shots were fired, and angry defiances exchanged. The Nationalists called on the Government to protect their meetings and to prohibit the rival Orange displays. The Orangemen and their sympathisers, on the other hand, desired their demonstrations, as legal, to be permitted, and those of their opponents, composed, as they said, of intending rebels, to be suppressed. The Government continued, as they were advised by their Ulster Liberal supporters, to act in an independent and impartial spirit. Lord Rossmore was afterwards suspended from the commission of the peace. This suspension was strongly blamed by the Orangemen, and Lord Spencer and his colleagues received no thanks for it from the Nationalists. An imposing demonstration, with what were represented as invasion objects, was held sometime afterwards in Dromore, county Tyrone. It was met by a counter-demonstration, summoned by Colonel Stuart Knox, the Lord Lieutenant of the

County, and encouraged by Deputy-Lieutenants and magistrates. A protest signed by them and others was drawn up against Lord Rossmore's virtual dismissal from the commission of peace. Lord Spencer and his advisers received no fair play either from the Orangemen or the Nationalists.

The two parties continued to denounce each other and to condemn the Government. The Ulster Liberal Society at the same time met in Belfast, and passed there three resolutions supporting a steady adherence to the policy of equal laws, with an equally steady adherence to the Union, and expressing unabated confidence in the Liberal party of Great Britain, and in Mr. Gladstone and his Government, as ably representing that party. The Prime Minister had himself just returned from a yachting excursion in the northern seas. His voyage had not had any of the unpleasant maritime accidents which had occurred to Mr. Smith's yacht *Pandora* as it had waited upon Sir Stafford Northcote in the North of Ireland. The Prime Minister was delighted with the three resolutions of the Ulster Liberal Society. Writing from Downing Street on the 3rd of November, he said: "Upon grounds much higher than the support of any Minister or party, I hail the expression of views which combine attachment to the Empire with the principle of equal rights for the three kingdoms, and loyalty to the Throne, with a strict obedience to law and order on the part of those who proclaim it as their watchword." Here again we have brave words, braver even than Mr. Gladstone wrote to the same

Ulster Liberal friends at the beginning of the year, braver than those which Lord Spencer had, two months before, spoken at the Giant's Causeway: as brave as they could possibly be in expression of the old Liberal creed as still regarded with unswerving attachment by the old hereditary Liberals of Ulster.

Lord Waveney, as President of the Ulster Liberal Unionist Association, thoroughly identified himself with those three resolutions. The death of the Marquis of Donegall, who had long been virtually an absentee, had just left the Lord Lieutenancy of the county of Antrim vacant. To that office Lord Waveney was appointed by the Government. Not long before the Marquis of Donegall's death he had been asked by his successor in the Lord Lieutenancy and by Sir Thomas M'Clure, whether he did not still as a Liberal approve of Mr. Gladstone's policy. The reply was "D— Gladstone's policy."

Of that policy, however, Lord Waveney professed thoroughly to approve. He said with respect to the letter from the Prime Minister addressed to the Ulster Liberals: "Surely, nothing can be more satisfactory. Mr. Gladstone, you see, is in favour of equal rights for the three kingdoms, and of the strictest obedience to law and order. We can thoroughly depend upon him to oppose both the Nationalists and Orangemen." "Yes," replied an Ulster friend, "Mr. Gladstone says himself that he gives expression to views higher than the support of any ministry or party. He at least will never desert us or the cause of the Union." This was the unanimous opinion of the Ulster Liberals

who had passed the three resolutions which gave Mr. Gladstone so much satisfaction.

The Nationalists and Orangemen, however, still continued to show little toleration to each other. They wished the Government to do what, with all respect to the magistrates of so many Ulster counties, they could not justly have done. Lord Spencer and his colleagues endeavoured, in Mr. Chamberlain's words, to steer an even keel. But this was most difficult, and of course not popular with either of the two extreme parties.

As the year 1883 closed they both, however, received a significant lesson in the county of Londonderry. By the death of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, Mr. Hugh Law, whom everybody respected and spoke well of, the highest judicial office became vacant. It was some time before it was filled by the appointment to the Chancellorship of Sir Edward Sullivan, the then Master of the Rolls. A long time elapsed before a successor in the Rolls Court was chosen in the person of the Attorney General, Mr. Porter, who was then still one of the representatives of the county of Londonderry. An election for the county became inevitable. Mr. Naish, the Solicitor General, succeeded Mr. Porter as Attorney General. He was a distinguished lawyer and a Catholic, but it was generally admitted that he had no chance of being returned for any constituency ; nor indeed had any other Catholic lawyer, mainly through the opposition of the Nationalists. With regard to this fact it was then remarked, "The Catholic judges now on the

bench were nearly all at one time Liberal members of Parliament, but not one of them, if in political life at the present hour, would have the slightest chance of being returned for any constituency of the South or West."

That Mr. Naish, who was afterwards for a short time Irish Lord Chancellor, was not selected as the Government candidate in the county of Londonderry at this vacancy showed that his prospects of being returned even in Northern Ulster were not thought to be good. The newly appointed Irish Solicitor General, Mr. Samuel Walker, Q.C., was considered to have a better prospect of success. He was a Protestant Episcopalian who was believed to be thoroughly sound as an opponent of Home Rule and all that was understood to be Irish Nationalism. Though an excellent lawyer, his career at the bar had, however, for the most part attracted little notice ; in Ulster he could scarcely be said to be known at all, and he could not be considered a favourite with any party.

Such as he was, however, Mr. Samuel Walker became the accepted Ulster Liberal candidate. By thus supporting a Protestant Episcopalian Solicitor General, with no local claims, it was thought that the Liberals of Londonderry, so many of whom were Presbyterians and tenant farmers, could best show their gratitude to Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues.

At the last contest in the county there had been two candidates, a Nationalist and a Conservative, opposed to Mr. Porter, the Attorney General of that time. On the eve of the polling the Nationalist had

retired in favour of the Conservative, as in a recent election for Tyrone a Nationalist had also retired in favour of another Conservative. The extreme Tory, Colonel Stuart Knox, had shaken hands with Mr. Parnell in anticipation of the Liberal Mr. Thomas A. Dickson's defeat: but those tactics had not been successful. It was felt hopeless to repeat them in county Londonderry. On January 10th, 1884, Mr. Walker was returned without opposition. In contrast with what had previously occurred, and what was subsequently to occur, this fact was very remarkable.

Yet the changes in the Irish law officers had im portant consequences in Ulster. Fifteen years had passed away since Mr. Gladstone began as Prime Minister to carry out his great remedial policy in Ireland. During his first Government, and up to this time in his second, he had always had associated with the administration distinguished Ulstermen, and especially in the law offices. Lord O'Hagan, his first Irish Lord Chancellor, as has been stated, was an Ulsterman. Born and bred among the people, he knew Ulster thoroughly. Though a Catholic he had much sympathy with the Protestants and fully appreciated their many admirable qualities. There was nothing about him of that sectarianism which animates the more ignorant Catholic and Nationalist members south of the Boyne. It might be said that he was almost nervously apprehensive of giving offence to the Protestants. Even when he was told as Lord Chancellor that he had refused to make appointments of Liberals as county magistrates after-

wards made by the Conservatives, his reply was, "The Conservatives can do what we cannot do." Many Catholics in Ulster complained that they had fared worse under Lord O'Hagan as a Catholic Chancellor than they had done, and afterwards did, under Liberal Protestant heads of the law. But this was scarcely a fact. That it was asserted at all showed how anxious Lord O'Hagan was not to unnecessarily irritate those to whom in the province he might be considered opposed, not only on political but on religious grounds.

Then his successor, Mr. Hugh Law, was also an Ulsterman, thoroughly acquainted with the province. He had practised many years with eminent success on the North-East Circuit, and had the esteem and confidence of all parties. Born in the county of Down, he died suddenly at his seat in Donegal. His intellect was eminently judicial. He was thoroughly in sympathy with Ulster, without being in any way associated with extreme prejudices, political or sectarian. Of Mr. Porter, who succeeded Sir Edward Sullivan as the Master of the Rolls, similar praise might be given. He knew Ulster well. A native of Belfast, and the son of a distinguished Unitarian minister, the Rev. John Scott Porter, Mr. Andrew Porter had studied at the Queen's College in his native town, and might be considered a typical representative of the class of accomplished men whom that Queen's College produces.

But Sir Edward Sullivan, though also a distinguished lawyer, was not an Ulsterman. Neither was

Mr. Samuel Walker, Q.C., who was now appointed Irish Solicitor General, and not long afterwards Attorney General. With the best intentions, Mr. Gladstone's Irish administration began to get out of sympathy with Ulster. That Government was indeed still as strongly Unionist as any ministry could be. On the great question of the Union there was no difference between Lord Spencer and his Conservative predecessors in the Lord Lieutenancy, the Duke of Abercorn and the Duke of Marlborough. But it began to be felt that the Irish Government was not administered by men so thoroughly in touch with Ulster as they had been. There was a change, if at first scarcely a perceptible change. Some people might think that this change was to the advantage of the Catholics: this may, however, be questioned. Ulstermen, by their training and their associations, have in many parts of the widely extended British Empire shown a governing faculty which, it may be said, without any desire to give offence or to assume any unbecoming superiority, has not been manifested to the same degree by their Irish countrymen in the other three provinces. At no time are they likely to be wanting to themselves, and, it may be hoped, to the Empire.

CHAPTER III

1884—1885

A New Reform Bill—Mr. Gladstone's Pledges in Introducing the Measure and on the Second Reading—His Repeated and Emphatic Unionist Declarations—"The civilised world"—Condemnation of the Government by its Own Supporters—The Last Meeting of Catholic and Protestant Liberals in Belfast as a United Party—Lord Spencer's Visit to Belfast—Embarrassment—Defeat of the Franchise Bill in the House of Lords—Mr. Gladstone's Strong Declarations on the Duty of Protecting the Irish Minority—Meeting of Parliament in the Autumn—The Redistribution Bill—Another County Down election—An Interesting Question—A Visitor to Belfast—"Buy a revolver."

BEFORE the meeting of Parliament, on the 5th of February, for the session, it was well understood that the Government would introduce another measure of Parliamentary reform. In the previous autumn Mr. John Morley, who had recently been returned for Newcastle-upon-Tyne, had struck the keynote on this subject at a conference in Leeds, not the first nor the last of its kind. It was well known that the measure would propose to reduce the county franchise to the same level as the rating household franchise in the boroughs, but whether it would

include a redistribution scheme, or whether a Bill reducing the franchise would apply to Ireland, was not known. All doubts, however, were set at rest by the announcement in the Queen's Speech. It was said that the measure would have for its principal object the enlargement of the occupation franchise in the Parliamentary elections of the United Kingdom: the special words "United Kingdom" of course implied that the measure would apply to Ireland as well as Great Britain. The omission of all reference to redistribution also clearly implied that the measure would not deal with that question, which some people, who knew Ireland well, thought the more important of the two. The announcement in the Queen's Speech roused some misgivings among those who remembered Mr. Gladstone's Reform Bill of 1866. It was said in Ulster immediately after the speech was telegraphed, and by a very friendly critic, "Once more Mr. Gladstone is about to cross the Rubicon. Once more he will, sooner or later, burn his boats."

The introduction of the Franchise Bill was delayed for more than three weeks. There were long debates on the action of the Government with respect to the rival Nationalist and Orange meetings, and on the suspension of Lord Rossmore by the commissioners under the Irish Great Seal, after Mr. Hugh Law, the Chancellor's lamented death. Mr. Parnell and his followers blamed Lord Spencer and his colleagues for not prohibiting the Orange demonstrations in proximity to the Nationalist, and the Irish Conserva-

tive members blamed the Government for not preventing the Nationalist meetings as invasions and as disloyal. The affairs in Egypt and the Soudan, just as Parliament met, encouraged the Opposition to bring forward a series of votes of censure. General Baker's defeat at Tokar, the subsequent operations of General Graham, and the uncertainty of General Gordon's position at Khartoum, with the rumours of his capture and death, encouraged motion after motion and debate after debate, to the delay of the Franchise Bill, which was understood to be the great measure of the session, and on which it was of course believed that the fate of the Government was staked.

It was not until the 28th of February that Mr. Gladstone was enabled to introduce the measure. The Bill, of which the principle, as Mr. Gladstone said, was to establish a general household suffrage, was received with much approval by the Liberal party generally. The Prime Minister's speech, too, was by his followers enthusiastically applauded. At that time no person could believe from his language and the principles he laid down that Mr. Gladstone could ever contemplate conceding Irish Home Rule. Ireland was, he said, to have the same franchise as England and Scotland, because she was part of the same United Kingdom, and as such ought not therefore to be placed with respect to the franchise in an inferior position. In the course of his speech he used some remarkable words. "I will say," he declared, "that the cause of this Bill, and I may say the fundamental spirit in the structure of this Bill, is

in the direction and with the intention of bringing *about a union of the three kingdoms in one nation.*" The announcement was received with the loudest ministerial cheers. There was not a hint of any intention or desire to establish a separate Legislature for Ireland. Mr. Gladstone spoke as a Unionist, and he addressed Unionists. From an Irish Unionist point of view, as a step to the concession of an Irish Parliament, the measure would have been very differently regarded. After the more serious outrages had ceased in Ireland, there had been begun, as we have seen, a series of dynamite explosions in London itself, and the Prime Minister, in bringing in his Franchise Bill, could not but know, as well as other people, the character of many of the men with whom he and his Government had to deal.

The Ulster Liberals knew at this time that from the Irish Nationalists they could expect no consideration. When the intention of reducing the county franchise to household suffrage, as in the boroughs, was first talked about, Mr. John Redmond was reported publicly to have said, "This will enable us to cut the throats of all the Irish Liberals." Mr. Timothy Healy, always the most outspoken member of his party, had more recently used similar language. The debate on the introduction of the Bill was adjourned until the following Monday, when the measure was read a first time without a division. "As regards Ireland," said Sir Stafford Northcote in concluding his speech, "I sincerely hope that the minority will not be overwhelmed."

Mr. Gladstone's followers in Ireland were fully aware of the danger to which they at least were exposed. So were the Ulster members they returned to give him a steady support. They had many misgivings; but, believing thoroughly in Mr. Gladstone's declared devotion to the Union, they considered it their duty as usual to make some sacrifice and to run great risks to uphold the Liberal principle of equal laws, to which in their repeated addresses to the great Liberal leader they had asserted their adhesion. One of these Ulster Liberal members said at this time, "The Bill of course, when passed, will take power from the more respectable tenant farmers and give it to the agricultural labourers, who for the most part in the Ulster counties are either Nationalists or Orangemen. The service franchise especially will have very much this effect. The old Ulster Liberals will suffer the most."

The second reading of the Bill was postponed for a fortnight. During that time, and during the debate which afterwards began, the Prime Minister was suffering from his throat. It was thought that he might not be able to speak at all during the discussion; but he did so on the last night, April the 7th, just before the Easter holidays, when the second reading was carried by the large majority of a hundred and thirty, all the Ulster Liberals being at their posts except two, who were absent from illness, and all believing in the Prime Minister's assurances, again stated, that the Irish franchise was being dealt with as those of the two sister countries, that the

three might be regarded as one. There were complaints made by some members that the representation of Ireland was much larger in proportion to the population than in Great Britain. This Mr. Gladstone admitted. Ireland, he said, according to her population, was not entitled to more than ninety-three members, ten less than she possessed; but he asserted that according to population when her Reform Bill was carried by Lord Grey's administration, she might have been entitled to two hundred. He did not, he said, assume that the population of Ireland would continue to decline. His argument undoubtedly implied that if it did still decrease, the number of members ought proportionately to be diminished.

Mr. Gladstone, however, gave no encouragement to the assertion, which was then for the first time made, that the proportion of Ireland's representation had been fixed by the Act of Union, and could not therefore be decreased. If this were a fact, it would follow that this proportion could not be increased. It had been increased. As this argument that the number of representatives, having been fixed by the Act of Union cannot be reduced has been recently revived, it may be as well to show what Mr. Pitt's opinions were on this subject when he was considering the resolutions of the Irish Parliament in favour of the Union and carrying the Act. He said that contribution as well as population ought to be regarded, even though when combined they might not be perfectly accurate. "Taking," Mr. Pitt observed, "this principle, it will appear that the

proportion of contribution proposed to be established is seven and a half for Great Britain and one for Ireland, and that in the proportion of population Great Britain is to Ireland as two and a half or three to one, so that the result will be something more than five to one in favour of Great Britain, which is about the proportion that it is proposed to establish between the representatives of the two countries."[1] It is fair to Mr. Pitt to remember that he always considered the removal of the Catholic disabilities as the development of this Unionist policy, that this had previously been his object when Lord Fitzwilliam was sent to Ireland five years before, and that pledges had been given which he found himself afterwards unable to fulfil, and which soon afterwards led to his resignation. The rebellion of '98 rendered the Act of Union absolutely necessary as an alternative to the separation of the two islands.

Before going into committee on the Bill, Mr. Chaplin gave notice of an amendment expressly excluding Ireland from its provisions. There was a crowded House, but the motion was withdrawn. Mr. Gladstone again spoke, and his speech was considered even still more reassuring to the loyal minority of all classes and creeds than his two former declarations to the same effect. "Is there," he asked, "in our view a United Kingdom?" The aim and object

[1] See Mr. Pitt's speech of April 21st, 1800. It was quoted at this time with especial reference to the subject. Parliamentary History, vol. 35, 43.

of the Act of Union were, he asserted, to introduce Ireland to the enjoyment of equal rights with other parts of the United Kingdom. In this very important speech on May 1st, he admitted that the reduction would introduce 40,000 new Irish electors to the Parliamentary franchise, but he maintained at the same time that it would place on the electoral rolls a million and a half of new English and Scotch electors. These English and Scotch electors would not be afraid to look Mr. Parnell and his Nationalist supporters in the face. The only thing which could weaken the position of England and derogate from the power of the Imperial Parliament would be to make the Act of Union a cover for denying to Ireland the rights granted to the rest of the kingdom. This was Mr. Gladstone's language. His fervour in favour of the inclusion of Ireland in the Bill as a means of strengthening the Union between the two islands powerfully affected his followers, who cheered to the echo his Unionist declarations. Nothing could be more emphatic.

On Friday, the 16th of May, in committee, the question of the exclusion of Ireland from the Bill was revived. Mr. Gladstone again declared that all the fears expressed by Mr. Plunket and others as to the position in which the loyal minority could be placed by the admission of the lower class of Irish householders to the county franchise were groundless. And why? Because the loyal minority could depend for protection on the large majority of the English and Scotch electors. His words were: "I will

say that no law could be passed in this House adverse to that loyal minority of Ireland except by the consent of the representatives of both England and Scotland." "In this House," that is, the House of Commons of Great Britain and Ireland. But what, according to this reasoning, would be the position of the loyal minority in Ireland if a separate Irish Parliament were conceded? This question was not then asked because it was not thought possible that any English Prime Minister, that any English statesman, that any Imperial Government would ever bring forward such a measure. Mr. Gladstone's speeches on this question were utterly inconsistent with such a notion. In the very speech now referred to he said that though fifty years before the opinion of the civilised world had regarded England in the light of a culprit for her government of Ireland, that opinion had entirely changed.

Mr. Gladstone, not foreseeing how soon afterwards he would appeal to the judgment of the civilised world against England for her government of Ireland, repeated more emphatically this declaration. "I say, moreover," he continued to affirm, "that the civilised world has since entirely changed in its judgment, and whether or not the opinion may be that we have been able to settle and establish any satisfactory system of legislation for Ireland, civilised mankind admits and knows, at all events, that for a long course of years there has been an honest and energetic attempt to move in the direction, and that conviction on the part of the civilised world was the

only element that could be wanting to the strength of this country."[1]

At this time the Government were far from popular even with their most prominent supporters. During one of my usual May visits, at a dinner party given by a prominent Liberal Irish member, afterwards one of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule colleagues, I was surprised at the manner in which the ministry was condemned. I found myself represented by Liberals, and in the presence of one at least of Mr. Gladstone's nearest relatives, as "the only Irish editor who supported the present Government." I was told by my genial and kindly host that he had asked Mr. Parnell to meet me because I was that solitary editor, that *rara avis.*

Yet Ulster Liberals of all sections were still considered thoroughly devoted to Mr. Gladstone. During the Whitsuntide holidays, a fortnight after the Prime Minister's last declaration that the loyal minority in Ireland could always depend on the majority of English and Scotch representatives in the House of Commons for protection, on the invitation of the Ulster Liberal Society an afternoon conference and an evening public meeting were held in Belfast. The time had gone when Liberal meetings were systematically broken up by Tory and Orange mobs. In the new and handsome thoroughfare called the Royal Avenue—the names of the streets have generally a loyal significance in Belfast—

[1] Mr. Gladstone's speech in the House of Commons, May 16th, 1884.

the Ulster Reform Club, built by subscriptions from the more wealthy Liberals in the province to celebrate Mr. Gladstone's triumph of 1880, had for some time been slowly rising, and was now advancing to completion. But this Liberal public meeting was held in the Clarence Place Hall. It was attended by Mr. Charles Russell, not yet one of Mr. Gladstone's law officers, and ten years before his appointment of Lord Chief Justice of England, made while this book is being prepared for the press. He had since 1880 represented Dundalk as a Liberal, but not as a Home Ruler or Nationalist. From the time of this election he had been bitterly opposed by the Nationalists, who never had for him a good word. In Belfast he was well remembered as a solicitor, and had deservedly the good will of all parties. Mr. O'Connor Power, who represented Mayo, and had now been driven from the Nationalist ranks as too moderate and not sufficiently obedient to the Parnellite despotism, was also present at this Ulster Liberal meeting. When he spoke he was interrupted by a party of noisy Nationalists who had obtained seats in the gallery and were now interfering with public meetings in the manner they had formerly professed so much to condemn in the Orangemen. There were a large number of Catholics present. This was indeed almost the very last time when Ulster Liberals, Protestant and Catholic, met in Belfast as a united party. Not a word was said about Home Rule; not a word about Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues ever being likely to concede an Irish Parliament and Government. Satis-

faction was expressed at the inclusion of Ireland in the Franchise Bill for the United Kingdom, and resolutions were passed for an improvement in the provisions for land purchase in the two great Irish Land Acts associated with Mr. Gladstone's two Governments and name.

This was all. It was then thought to be enough. One of the most remarkable parts of Mr. Charles Russell's speech had reference to the Orangemen. "I have never," he observed, "said an unfriendly word of the great body of the Orangemen. But for their leaders I have the utmost contempt." These words, delivered with much fervour, were loudly cheered. They were understood to be directed at what had occurred in Newry. In the preceding December there had been attempted one of the Nationalist invasion meetings; but the spirit, as has been said, then had been checked and appeared to be dying out. Another demonstration, however, had been announced there for Whitsunday, 8th of June. No sooner was this intention known than an appeal was made by another distinguished Orangeman to the brethren to hold a counter-demonstration in the event of the Irish Executive not prohibiting the Nationalist one. As the Protestants had always condemned Sunday political demonstrations, moderate people thought this threat of a counter-demonstration on that day scarcely consistent with the keeping of the Sabbath holy according to the precept and practice of the Protestant Churches, and especially of the Presbyterians in the North of Ireland. A letter had

appeared some time before from the Irish Lord Chancellor's secretary, of course dictated by the Lord Chancellor himself, strongly reflecting on the magistrates of Ulster, who, like Lord Rossmore, had encouraged the counter Orange demonstrations at the same time as the Nationalist, and in their immediate neighbourhood. The two meetings were prohibited at the last moment, but in reply to a communication to the Lord Lieutenant, the Permanent Under Secretary also wrote a letter, which was published, reflecting on Lord Arthur Hill and others who thus sought to force the hand of the Irish Executive and compel them to take a course they thought scarcely justifiable on legal and constitutional grounds. Lord Arthur Hill replied, and the correspondence became the subject of a warm controversy.

At this very time Lord Spencer had accepted the invitation of the Mayor and Corporation of Belfast to visit the town. The invitation had first been given in the preceding October, it had been renewed in December, but only arranged at the beginning of June. It was extremely awkward that the visit was announced to take place while the publication of the official letter to Lord Arthur Hill had roused the feeling of the Orangemen against the Liberal Lord Lieutenant. It was regarded by the friends of the Government as additional evidence that the Lord Lieutenant's new advisers did not know Ulster so well as his former Irish Lord Chancellors and law officers had done. The custom had been to consult privately representative members of

the Liberal party in the province before steps were taken likely to embarrass the Lord Lieutenant. On this occasion the course was not taken. In anticipation of Lord Spencer's arrival indignation Orange meetings were held in Belfast, and some strong language was used by various speakers, and particularly by the clergymen, intermingled with cries of "Shoot him!" and "We'll blow his brains out!" from some of the more foolish members of the audiences.

The friends of the Government were consulted just before the day fixed for the beginning of the visit to Belfast. When consulted I strongly advised the private secretary, the present Sir Courtenay Boyle, not to allow it to be seen that Lord Spencer could be intimidated, and I assured him that among the more respectable classes of Belfast of all parties there was enough of good feeling and common sense to prevent the Queen's representative from being unbecomingly treated. Mr. Courtenay Boyle was told that, as the Lord Lieutenant could not visit the towns in the South and West of Ireland, lest he should be exposed to disloyal manifestations, it would never do to have it represented that he could not show his face in the very centre of loyalty.

The dilemma was a serious one. It was the cause of great anxiety to all who wished well to the Government and to Lord Spencer himself. Many Ulster friends had seen the Lord Lieutenant in Dublin riding at the head of his escort of lancers, alone, but apparently facing with much courage his enemies and the enemies of the Government, who, it

was well known, were quite as ready to take his life as they had been to assassinate Mr. Forster when he was Irish Chief Secretary. To those who were devoted to the British connection, Lord Spencer appeared almost sublime in his solitary rides through the streets and suburbs of the Irish metropolis while conscious that he was the object of murderous designs. Belfast Loyalists, as they thus on their visits to Dublin met Lord Spencer, in such circumstances took off their hats to him and wished him God speed.

In Belfast, at this time, the Liberal Lord Lieutenant, notwithstanding the provocations which his Government had given to the Orangemen, was, as I anticipated, well received. He unveiled a portrait of the Queen in the Corporation Hall, laid the foundation-stone of the Free Library in the new Royal Avenue, visited many of the great manufacturing establishments, was twice present at the North-East Agricultural Show, dined with the mayor and corporation, took luncheon with the Harbour Board, and was otherwise entertained by his host, the chairman of the trust, the late Sir Edward Harland. His most important speech was made at the mayor's dinner, in the presence of many strong Conservatives. The occasion was a critical one, but the best of good feeling was displayed. Knowing that he was himself even the object of the deadly hatred of conspirators who hesitated not to blow up public buildings and take life, and that very recently there had been in London several of these dynamite explosions,

which were intended to destroy and to intimidate, Lord Spencer said that "the conspirators, whose objects are even published in the press, adopt assassination and explosion as their means for carrying on what they call a scientific war, to try and tyrannise over this nation; but they know little the metal of which British statesmen are made. Statesmen and public men may fall by their hand—alas! some have fallen in this country by the hand of the assassin—buildings may be destroyed and innocent lives sacrificed, but statesmen will spring to their feet and take the place of those who have fallen; and if public buildings are destroyed, or innocent lives sacrificed, the nation to which we belong will persevere and not be frightened." Here again were brave words, very brave words. As he spoke them Lord Spencer seemed heroic, and he was cheered to the echo.

The manner in which the Lord Lieutenant was thus received in Belfast was warmly commented upon by the *Times* and all the morning newspapers in London, Liberal as well as Conservative. It was considered very creditable to the people, as indeed it was. Great distrust was entertained by nearly all the Conservatives at the inclusion of Ireland in the Franchise Bill, which was then slowly passing through the Committee of the House of Commons. But publicly in Lord Spencer's presence there was no condemnation of that policy which he and the Government were understood to represent.

It is not necessary here to follow the subsequent history of the measure. The Franchise Bill was

virtually defeated on the motion for the second reading by Lord Cairns's amendment, to the effect that the Lords declined proceeding with it until they had before them a redistribution scheme which was its necessary accompaniment. This was always foreseen. Ireland especially had been, and still is very badly treated in the matter of redistribution. She was promised a Bill of this character when the Reform Bill of Lord Derby's administration was passed; she had, indeed, been promised a Redistribution Bill by both parties, but that promise had by both been virtually unfulfilled.

Parliament was prorogued on the understanding, as announced in the Queen's Speech, that it would again be soon called together, when the Franchise Bill would be reintroduced. On the last days of August Mr. Gladstone went down to his constituents and delivered his second series of Midlothian speeches, which, like the first, were read with especial interest in Ulster. In one, which excited much attention, was a passage in which he again referred to the position of the loyal minority in Ireland as it would be affected by the reduction of the franchise. In that address the Nationalists were condemned in very strong terms, and the most positive assurances given that Ireland would never be politically separated from Great Britain. "I have no doubt," said the then Liberal Prime Minister, "that the organisation of what is termed the Nationalist party in Ireland will for some little time disturb the action of our Parliamentary system. There will be time wasted;

there will be measures obstructed; there will be a good deal of trial of temper, and perhaps now and then a ministry will be overturned, possibly a Parliament dissolved; but rely upon this, gentlemen, that so long as you continue to pursue a policy of justice and liberality towards Ireland—I do not gratuitously and without consideration undertake the office of a prophet—rely, gentlemen, upon this," Mr. Gladstone repeated, "so long as you continue to pursue a course of justice and liberality towards Ireland, although you may still have a residue of trouble handed over to you from the mistakes of former generations, nothing can happen in Ireland which will abate the strength of this mighty Empire, nothing which can seriously trouble its Imperial action, and under no circumstances can it happen, and it would be the greatest misfortune if it could, but never can it happen that Ireland will be dissevered from Great Britain." These most emphatic declarations were applauded throughout, and the last words, "never can it happen that Ireland will be dissevered from Great Britain," were, as is stated in the report, "received with loud and prolonged cheering."

"Have you read Gladstone's speech?" one enthusiastic admirer of the Liberal statesman asked another in Belfast. The reply was, "I have." "What do you think of it?" "Oh, the part in which he referred to the Nationalists and declared that he would keep Ireland closely united with Great Britain was that which especially interests us. To reduce the county franchise so low is a ticklish thing, but so

long as we are under the protection of the United Parliament we are safe."[1]

Several Liberal meetings were afterwards held in Ulster in support of the Government. One of these, attended by several members of Parliament, was in Belfast. It again expressed the devotion of the party to the principle of equal laws. Relying on what Mr. Gladstone had said, the policy of keeping up a higher franchise in Ireland than in England and Scotland was strongly repudiated. A similar meeting was held at Portadown, in Armagh. This was and is an extreme Orange neighbourhood. There the Orangemen attempted to interrupt the proceedings; missiles were thrown; and some of the speakers, including Mr. Thomas A. Dickson, the Liberal member for Tyrone, had their heads broken, and other Liberals had to fly for their lives.

The next day in the Queen's Speech it was stated that Parliament had been called together to consider the great subject of the representation of the people in Parliament. The advance of Lord Wolseley to Dongola, on his way, as was said, to rescue the gallant General Gordon at Khartoum, and the affairs of the Transvaal, which had assumed a very threatening attitude, were cursorily mentioned; but the Bill for improving the representation of the people was admitted to be the main, and indeed the sole reason of the autumn session. The Franchise Bill was reintroduced. It seemed that there was again likely

[1] See Mr. Gladstone's speech in the Corn Exchange, Edinburgh, September 1st, 1884.

to be an irreconcilable difference between the two Houses on this question. But on the motion for the second reading, which had been postponed by Nationalists acting in concert with the Conservatives, and which Mr. Parnell had called a sham constitutional reform, Mr. Gladstone spoke in general and conciliatory language respecting distribution. Even after Lord Cairns's amendment, which was not a formal rejection of the measure, had been carried against the Bill in the last session, another resolution was proposed expressing the readiness of the Peers to pass the Franchise Bill as soon as they had before them the general scheme of redistribution. The second reading in the House of Commons was reaffirmed by a majority of 140; and, the Parnellites voting for it, though they had not been expected to go with the ministerialists into the lobby, there was an increase of ten votes over the majority of last session.

The time was felt to have come for a compromise. The Marquis of Salisbury met Mr. Gladstone and two of his principal colleagues. After what were called conciliatory conferences, they came to an agreement on redistribution. Boroughs under 15,000 inhabitants were to cease to return members, and their constituencies were to be merged in their counties. Those with less than 50,000 of a population were only to return one representative each. Those having a population of 50,000 and under 165,000 were to retain two members, and those above the last figures to have additional representatives. But the most important part of the

scheme consisted of the single-member districts of constituencies with more than 165,000 inhabitants, whether urban or county, said to have been suggested by Lord Salisbury. It appeared to increase the anomaly of towns returning two members after the old fashion. These were the leading provisions as arranged by the leaders of the two parties. There were, too, to be boundary commissioners; those for England had indeed already begun their work. Ireland was to retain the large proportion of members it possessed; while the steadily diminishing population rendered this reservation more anomalous than when it received three additional members at the time of Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli's great leap to household suffrage in the boroughs.

The renewal of party contests on this subject was avoided. Whether this compromise, as thus arranged, was satisfactory may well be questioned, and on its affecting Ireland, and particularly Ulster, something will have to be said. Thursday, the 4th of December, was a memorable day in the history of Parliament. On that day the Redistribution Bill was read a second time in the House of Commons. The Franchise Bill also passed through committee in the House of Lords. It was read a third time the next day, and became law before the adjournment of Parliament on Saturday, the 6th of December. At first an autumn session, as distinct from the usual session of the year, had been contemplated; but after the compromise had been come to, it was arranged that the two Houses should only

be adjourned, that the Redistribution Bill should be taken up as it stood, and passed through the remaining stages after the two Houses again met on the 19th of the following February.

That, with the great reduction in the county franchise, and the abolition of the small boroughs, henceforth to be thrown into the counties, there would be a most important change in the Ulster representation was at once recognised. An astute Conservative election agent in Ulster, Mr. Finnigan, pointed out that even on the Conservative representation the effect would be disastrous, and that at the very most the Liberals of the province, instead of holding the nine seats they then possessed, would only have three. The small boroughs, such as Carrickfergus, Lisburn, Coleraine, Downpatrick, and Armagh, would cease to return representatives. Mr. Finnigan proposed that disfranchisement should only in Ireland take effect when the population did not exceed ten thousand instead of fifteen; but on the principle of equal laws, to which the Ulster Liberals still clung as the only principle on which a United Parliament could be maintained, such a proposal could not of course be entertained.

Another election for the county of Down had recently taken place on the succession of Lord Castlereagh as Marquis of Londonderry to the peerage. At the counting of the votes it was proposed by Mr. Finnigan that the papers should be taken like banknotes in the various polling districts. Thus instead of all being mingled together they were sepa-

rated, and the number of votes polled in each district could be ascertained in what was called the preliminary count. This practice was allowed by the assessor and referee. It had consequences which the Conservative agent, whom the Redistribution Bill so much alarmed, had not foreseen. The Conservative candidate, a popular country gentleman, Captain Ker, had been returned over Mr. Crawford, the third and only surviving brother of the three sons of the William Sharman Crawford who in Ulster had first raised the flag of tenant right. Proud of their victory, the Conservatives boasted that it was a thoroughly Protestant one, and that the Catholics and Nationalists, though avowedly hostile to Mr. Gladstone's Government, had not voted for the Conservative candidate. The local morning Conservative journal said, "The Conservative voting in Down was purely Protestant voting, and the Conservative victory a purely Protestant victory." The local Nationalist newspaper, the then *Morning News*, confirmed this statement. It modestly remarked: "The Nationalists did not vote for the Conservative candidate; the Nationalists resolved to take no part in the contest." A statistical return, published immediately afterwards, from the counting of the voting papers in the districts as allowed before they were mixed together, showed a very different state of things. The Conservative agent was appealed to respecting the accuracy of the returns; but though then holding meetings protesting against the Redistribution Bill, on this question respecting the Catholic and Nationalist votes

polled for the Conservative candidate, as was said at the time, he made no sign.

As this election was one of the last which took place in Ulster and in a great Protestant county before the reduction of the franchise, some of the statistics as then given had great significance. It was shown that at Hillsborough, where there were only twenty Catholic electors, notwithstanding all the influence of the great house of Downshire and its worthy representative, Lord Arthur Hill, Mr. Crawford had very nearly as many votes as Captain Ker; that at Bangor, which is an extremely Orange district, where Mr. Johnston had defied the Party Processions Act, and where there were only three Catholic electors, Mr. Crawford had 195 votes and Captain Ker 77; that at Donaghadee, where there were no Catholics, Mr. Crawford had 199 votes, Captain Ker 19; that at Saintfield, where there were but 30 Catholics, Mr. Crawford's majority was nearly 3 to 1; and that at Killyleagh, near Captain Ker's estate, and where he had much influence, Mr. Crawford had 242 to the Captain's 77. On the other hand, where there was a preponderance of Catholic electors, the majority was decidedly in favour of the Conservative, Captain Ker. Of these Catholic votes the largest number was at Castlewellan, not far from the beautiful marine village of Newcastle. In that polling district they were in a decided majority over both the Protestant Episcopalians and the Presbyterians. It was there that Mr. Crawford only polled 40 votes to his opponent's 171.

These figures were conclusive. They showed that the Catholics, who were now for the most part Nationalists, were joining with the Conservatives in Ulster to defeat Mr. Gladstone's Liberal candidates. They showed that even in the county of Down, where they had made such sacrifices even without the ballot to return Mr. Crawford the father, they were now voting with those whom they had long regarded as their hereditary enemies against his son, Mr. Gladstone, and the Ulster Liberals, with whom they had so long been allied.

These Ulster Liberals, as we have seen, were warned that the effect of the reduction of the franchise and of the redistribution would be that they might lose six, if not all, the nine seats they possessed. Justice must be done, however, to Mr. Gladstone's supporters at that time in Ulster. They knew that under the complete scheme of reform, as carried in the session of Parliament which began on the 19th of February, 1885, they would be out-voted by the agricultural labourers, both Orange and Nationalist; that they would be between the two fires and suffer from both; that they might lose the whole representation they had succeeded in gaining during seventeen years, and that with the franchise and the distribution of seats as they had been, they might soon return Liberal representatives for nearly all Ulster. But relying on Mr. Gladstone's assurances, repeated until both measures became law, that they would always be under the protection of the Parliament of the United Kingdom,

they still continued resolutely in favour of the same scheme of reform as was being granted to Great Britain. Among them there was no wavering whatever. In Mr. Gladstone's cause, and in the cause of recognised Liberal principles, they were ready, as was afterwards said, to go down with the ship.

An important question, in consequence of events which were soon afterwards to follow, has been often asked. It is this: When Mr. Gladstone, up to and inclusive of this session of 1885, gave such positive assurances to the most respectable and influential minority in Ireland, devoted to the British connection, that they would always remain as loyal Unionists under the protection of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, did he then contemplate placing them by a Home Rule Act in the power of a dominant majority in an Irish Parliament, where they would be always out-voted, and consequently without any effective power of protecting themselves? Was Mr. Gladstone, while concealing his intentions, meditating such a surrender to the Irish Nationalists as he so soon afterwards made? On this subject his subsequent reference to stepping-stones was at least very remarkable. If he did not intend making this change when the two Reform Bills were passing through Parliament, he certainly brought his supporters in Ulster into a complete *cul-de-sac*. He was now in his seventy-sixth year. It was believed that this reduction of the franchise and the redistribution of seats would crown his work as a statesman, that it would be the last achievement of a great minis-

terial career. It was not supposed that when the royal assent was given to the Redistribution Bill, he was, at such an age, about to advance on a new and unknown path, leaving all his strong declarations in favour of the Union in his rear, and making common cause with the men whom he had denounced as at war with the integrity of the Empire, and indeed with all freedom and civilisation.

A visit was paid in April to Ulster by a distinguished Irishman, supposed then to be much in Mr. Gladstone's confidence. It was afterwards thought that he threw some light on what was then passing in the veteran Prime Minister's mind. Mr. James Bryce was born in Belfast. His honours as a student had been indeed acquired at Oxford; but he still had relatives, one of them a clergyman of eminence, in his native town. Just as the Easter holidays were at hand, while the Redistribution Bill was still in the House of Commons, Professor Bryce, as he was called, then member for the Tower Hamlets, went to Belfast. To a friend to whom he had written he expressed a desire to confer with some of the leading Ulster Liberals. A meeting of the General Committee of the new Ulster Reform Club was summoned for the 13th of the month "to confer," as was stated, "with Professor Bryce, M.P., on the present and future representation of the Ulster Liberal party." Mr. John Shaw Brown occupied the chair. He had five years before contested Belfast in Mr. Gladstone's interest, and very soon afterwards, for the northern division of County

Down, stood as a candidate in the same Liberal cause, to which he was passionately devoted. Mr. Bryce was introduced to the meeting by his old friend Mr. Robert MacGeagh, who was afterwards for a considerable time President of the Ulster Liberal Unionist Association.

All that was then spoken by the member for the Tower Hamlets is even up to this time well remembered. It was deeply impressed on the memory by the events which soon followed. Mr. Bryce himself, indeed, not long ago publicly referred to what then passed: a correspondent on the following day recapitulated what had taken place, and the accuracy of his statement was not questioned. Mr. Gladstone's emissary, as Mr. Bryce was thought to be, though of course he formally stated he was speaking only for himself, said that at the next general election a number of decided Radicals would be returned for England, that they would probably force Mr. Gladstone's hand, and oblige him to introduce an extreme measure of self-government for Ireland. It was not believed by the audience, in the face of his own very recent declarations, that the Prime Minister would make such a surrender. In the conversation which followed, Mr. Bryce was told that the Ulster Liberals were prepared to support a comprehensive Bill transferring to municipal and county bodies the full management and control of local affairs. With this he was not satisfied. He said, in a somewhat peremptory style, and with an "I could if I would" intimation, "Gentlemen, you will have to go

further." The Ulster Liberals were given to understand that at least they would have no choice but to follow Mr. Gladstone. It was not supposed that they would disobey one whom they had so long faithfully followed. Some of them expressed much alarm at the prospect of handing over to a Parliament in Dublin the power of dealing with the Irish education question, and of appointing the judges, the magistrates, and the police. Mr. Bryce agreed with these apprehensions. "That," he stated, "would be handing over the sheep to the wolves." He did more. As the meeting broke up he said to a gentleman, whose name afterwards a correspondent offered to give him, "Home Rule is coming; take my advice and buy a revolver."[1]

Mr. Bryce then at least saw that Home Rule was coming. It was afterwards supposed, truly or falsely, that he had had some hints on the subject from Mr. Gladstone himself, and that it was not merely of his own accord he then went to Belfast and had this interview with the prominent Ulster Liberals. However this may have been, one of Mr. Gladstone's most eminent colleagues at that time said to me, very soon after the great leader's sudden change, "I for some time suspected that Gladstone had these ideas." And so the mystery may be left to be cleared up, if it ever will be cleared up.

[1] I have received from the secretary of the Ulster Reform Club a copy of the minute of April 13th, 1885. See also Mr. Bryce's letter in the *Northern Whig*, April 12th, 1893, and the letter, in reply, signed John Rogers, on the following day, respecting the meeting.

CHAPTER IV

1885

The Private Opening of the Ulster Reform Club—"We forgot all about Ulster"—Lord Hartington's Invitation to Ulster—Lord Dufferin at Belfast before his Departure as Governor-General of India—Lord Hartington's Visit to Belfast Postponed—Defeat of the Government—Two Ulster Elections—Lord Spencer's Departure from the Lord Lieutenancy—Conduct of Certain Conservatives to Lord Spencer—The Banquet at the Reform Club—Lord Carnarvon as Lord Lieutenant—His Reception in Belfast—The Approach of the General Election—Mr. Gladstone's Address to the Electors of Midlothian—Conduct of the Conservative Party.

WHEN Mr. Bryce left Belfast he was invited to be present at the public opening of the Ulster Reform Club. This ceremony was expected to be performed during the Whitsuntide recess by the Marquis of Hartington. The member for the Tower Hamlets, whose visit as Mr. Gladstone's apparent emissary had caused some alarm, said, that if circumstances permitted him, he would gladly be present on such an occasion. The Club was now complete. The cost had been considerably more than the estimated 14,000*l.*, every penny of which had been subscribed before the work of building was begun. Professedly erected in

celebration of Mr. Gladstone's great triumph at the general election of 1880, it indicated an immense advance of Liberal opinion in Ulster. The Land Acts and the Ballot Act had made the tenant farmer free. The Conservatives of Ulster had no longer a monopoly of the Ulster representation. Their old boast, "We are twenty-nine," had become ridiculous. Nine of those seats they had lost to the Liberals, and had the franchise remained as it was, they would at the impending general election have lost many more. The Redistribution Bill, which had yet to be accepted by the House of Lords, had not unreasonably alarmed them more than it did the Ulster Liberals, who stood so steadily by their cherished principle of equality. The Ulster Conservatives had sent a very influential deputation to their leaders in London to protest against the compromise, which they believed to be most injurious to their interests. Sir Stafford Northcote was appealed to in a most imploring manner by his Ulster friends, who reminded him of all he had said in the many speeches he had delivered during his Ulster visit in the preceding autumn. He candidly admitted in the plainest language that the compromise was made by the Marquis of Salisbury and himself without considering the position of the Conservatives in Ulster. "Gentlemen," he said, "we forgot all about Ulster." The deputation returned to Belfast in a disappointed and angry mood.

When Lord Hartington, then Secretary of State for War, was waited upon at the War Office to come

to Ulster and open the Reform Club, he very readily consented. He, however, characteristically said, "I hope I shall not be expected to stump the province as Northcote did." He was told that not more than two speeches would be expected of him, one in the Club at its formal opening, and another at the public dinner it was intended to give him in the Ulster Hall. The visit was arranged to be paid during the Whitsuntide holidays, in the last week of May. But the apparent imminence of a war with Russia, only averted, as was thought, at the last moment by the noble appeal Mr. Gladstone made in the House of Commons to the conscience of the Tsar, was the cause of some uncertainty with respect to the fulfilment of Lord Hartington's engagement. The Russian difficulty was regarded with especial interest in Ulster, because Lord Dufferin was now the Viceroy of India, and had during the preceding autumn before his departure for the East been enthusiastically entertained at a banquet in Belfast by the representatives of both the Liberal and Conservative parties. The speech the new Viceroy had at that time delivered was in a most pacific spirit. Having been ambassador both at Constantinople and St. Petersburg, Lord Dufferin could speak with great authority on our relations with Russia. He referred to his friend M. de Giers, the Russian Foreign Minister, as, like himself, attached to peace; but it seemed for a time, though happily only for a short time, M. de Giers was unable to resist the old Russian war party.

The danger was averted. Lord Hartington was

able to leave the immediate scene of his official duties and cross over to Dublin on Wednesday, the 27th of May, in order, on the following morning, to proceed to Belfast. He was to be the guest of Sir Edward Cowan at Craigavad, to open the Club in the same afternoon, and afterwards to dine with the representative Liberals as arranged in the Ulster Hall. A telegram was received by his host stating that, though he was suffering from a feverish cold, he still hoped to fulfil his engagement. Later in the day, when the members of the Club were all present to welcome their distinguished visitor, as Mr. Gladstone's first lieutenant in the leadership of their party, other telegrams were received informing Sir Edward Cowan and his friends that by medical advice Lord Hartington had been compelled for the present to remain in Dublin. He required, it was said, rest for some days.

This was a grievous disappointment. The dinner in the Ulster Hall had been prepared, the seats at the various tables allotted, and the toasts and speakers arranged. It was decided to have the dinner; but of course without the principal guest. Under the circumstances the proceedings were not, of course, so enthusiastic as they would otherwise have been. The Conservative newspapers made jokes about the play of *Hamlet* being performed with the part of Hamlet omitted. It was insinuated that Lord Hartington's illness was more political than physical. The Government, as had been stated, were before the session ended to re-enact some parts of

the expiring Crimes Act, and especially those provisions which related to a change of venue, and in cases of intimidation the summary examination of witnesses and special juries. Mr. Gladstone was reported to concur with Lord Spencer and Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, who had recently succeeded Mr. Trevelyan as Irish Chief Secretary, in the necessity of re-enacting some of these clauses. It was reported, however, that there were differences in the Cabinet respecting this policy, and that Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke had even placed their resignations in Mr. Gladstone's hands. That there was a difference in the Cabinet on a renewal of any part of what was of course called a Coercion Act, there can be no doubt. It may be said to have been acknowledged. But that it was the cause of Lord Hartington's sudden abandonment of his intention to visit Belfast and publicly open the Reform Club was generally disbelieved by the Ulster Liberals. It seemed absurd to suppose that Lord Spencer and the Marquis would lend themselves to play a comedy, that Lord Hartington would retire to his bed at the Viceregal Lodge, have physicians sent for, his tongue looked at, his pulse felt, and saline draughts administered him in the spirit of Jonson and Molière's scenes, in order to excuse himself from fulfilling his engagement just as he was about to start for Belfast. The fact is, that during the difficulties and distractions of the campaign in the Soudan, and the preparations for the war with Russia which was at the last moment averted, Lord Hartington had been

overworked in his office. For a considerable time he had scarcely been able to leave London for any distance. He felt the great responsibility of public affairs and the somewhat doubtful position of the Government, that just before the adjournment for a recess had only defeated an amendment of Lord George Hamilton equivalent to a resolution of censure by a majority of thirty.

Even at the Devonshire and Reform Clubs the ministers were severely condemned for their Irish and foreign policy by their ablest supporters. One of those who were in Belfast on the evening of the postponement of Lord Hartington's visit, had a few days before said to me at the Reform Club: "The Government is committing blunder after blunder. We could scarcely have a worse." This was at a dinner when some of Mr. Gladstone's colleagues in his last two administrations were present. The chorus of condemnation was so general that I presumed to say, "Well, gentlemen, I must surely have made a mistake. I must be dining in the Carlton." Several of these gentlemen, then so free-spoken against the Government, were afterwards highly indignant with many of the Ulster Liberals for not blindly following Mr. Gladstone in his new Home Rule policy.

Lord Hartington's visit was only for a short time postponed. Before it was paid the Government were somewhat unexpectedly defeated on their Budget proposals by a combination of Nationalists and Conservatives just as they were understood to be about to introduce a measure renewing some parts of the

Crimes Act, a measure which, however, Mr. Gladstone said could not justly be called another Coercion Act. The event occurred on the 8th of June, only eleven days after the disappointment respecting Lord Hartington's visit to Belfast. It at once opened a new scene. When Lord Salisbury formed his first Government, which was expected to be short-lived, the Redistribution Bill had not left the House of Lords. There was some talk of rendering its passing conditional on Mr. Gladstone and his late colleagues coming to an understanding with their successors. This, however, was absurd. It had been understood that the general election should take place at the beginning of the following year, 1886. It was now however provided that the dissolution of the Parliament should take place early in November. The country was immediately thrown into a state of excitement by preparations for the general election in the autumn.

There had just been an election for the county of Antrim. This was in consequence of the death of Mr. James Chaine, the moderate and popular Conservative, who had done much to develop the port of Larne, the nearest connecting link with Scotland. The Hon. Robert O'Neill was selected as the Conservative candidate. He was opposed by the Liberal Mr. W. Pirrie Sinclair, and defeated by a considerable majority. Just as the Nationalists were boasting that with the reduced franchise in the counties, and the redistribution of seats, the Liberals would disappear from the Ulster representation, the

result of this election was regarded as a great Liberal triumph. It was noticed that in the contest the Catholics generally took no part.

Another contest immediately afterwards followed in the county of Down, by the appointment of Lord Arthur Hill as Comptroller of Her Majesty's Household. It took place in July, when the new Government was complete. Lord Arthur Hill, as the representative of the great House of Downshire, as the Orange Grand Master of the county, and now as the official representative of the new Government, had exceptional advantages. He defeated Mr. John Shaw Brown by 401 votes. It was noticed, too, that though the Nationalists threatened to oppose Lord Arthur on account of his conduct at Newry and elsewhere, in organising, like Lord Rossmore, simultaneous demonstrations in opposition to their invasions of Ulster, in the Castlewellan district, where the Catholics and Nationalists were so numerous, the new Comptroller of Her Majesty's Household had, as not long ago the Conservative Captain Ker had had, a considerable majority of votes.

Lord Arthur Hill announced himself as an opponent of Coercion. This became the avowed policy of the new Government. Though it was prophesied by the *Freeman's Journal* that Lord Spencer would not publicly show himself on his departure as Lord Lieutenant, and that he would even sneak out of Dublin, he left in the most public manner, and with the usual procession. He was still reproached with having unjustly hanged one of the Maamtrasna murderers,

Myles Joyce, though as usual he acted only on the judge's report, and he was represented as with his hands red with the blood of innocent men, by some of those who after his great change in Irish policy not long afterwards declared their readiness to black his boots.

At that time some members of the new Government did not disdain to join in the Nationalist cry against Lord Spencer, as a Coercionist and as responsible for the execution of Myles Joyce. With all the light of the experience of the years which followed it is painful to have to state this fact; but the truth must be told. After Lord Spencer had left office some of the Conservative Ministers sought to take credit to themselves and their party for being opposed to a coercive policy, which they had called out for and sought to make more stringent. Sir John Gorst, Lord Randolph Churchill, and, it must be said with regret, Sir M. Hicks-Beach, encouraged this cry against the retired Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. *Tanta lubido in partibus.*

In Ulster this denunciation of Lord Spencer as a Coercionist met with no sympathy whatever. It roused much indignation among the Ulster Liberals. "This," it was said, "will make the introduction of another Coercion Bill impossible."

A great deal was made of the fact that the new Lord Lieutenant, Lord Carnarvon, could have his public entry into Dublin without a military escort. At a banquet given in the Reform Club, under the chairmanship of Lord Hartington, 250 representatives of

the whole Liberal party may be said to have repelled with indignation the attacks to which Lord Spencer had been subjected. Mr. Gladstone wrote a remarkable letter, in which he reminded the marquis that the Conservatives had forced on the late Government a clause in the Crimes Bill regarded by the Prime Minister and his colleagues as much too severe. The letter was particularly referred to by Lord Hartington at this public dinner. Mr. Bright was eloquent in the late Lord Lieutenant's praise. Mr. Chamberlain, having to attend a meeting in Hackney to support the candidature of the present Lord Russell of Killowen, also, however, wrote a letter expressing in very indignant terms his regret at the manner in which even prominent Conservatives had turned round on Lord Spencer for administering the Crimes Act. Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour acted in a different spirit. They did not join in those short-sighted attacks. In the House of Lords Lord Salisbury took the opportunity of complimenting Lord Spencer while he was being so unbecomingly assailed by some of those who professed to be the Conservative leader's followers, and were his colleagues.

The new Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Carnarvon, once supposed to have had before him a brilliant political career, did not think it unbecoming to follow the example of some of his Conservative colleagues, and reflect on what was called the former coercive policy.

He went on a tour in the South and West of Ireland, where he was most complimentary to the Catholic

clergy, and most conciliatory to the Nationalists. To applications for the release of men then undergoing sentences for criminal outrages, represented as political offenders, he returned vague but not ungracious answers, reminding his audiences that he was not the only member of the Government, and that the powers of the Lord Lieutenant were limited.

The Conservatives in the North of Ireland professed to be very indignant with Lord Randolph Churchill, Sir John Gorst, Sir M. Hicks-Beach, and Lord Carnarvon. They held meetings in Belfast for the purpose of forming a new party which they called the Loyal Union. But this did not prevent them, as of course it ought not to have prevented them, giving a respectful if not an enthusiastic welcome to the Lord Lieutenant, when, after his tour in the South and West, he came to the North of Ireland. He was the guest of Sir Thomas Bateson, who had the family mansion on the Lagan, picturesquely situated just outside Belfast. Immediately afterwards Sir Thomas was made a peer. Though representing an English constituency, he took an active part in the Conservative policy of Ulster. He had recently presided at the meetings for the formation of the Loyal Union, but the Conservatives at that time, so far from encouraging union with the Ulster Liberals, as loyal as themselves, did not even ask the reporters of the Liberal newspapers to be present at their gatherings.

At a luncheon given by the Mayor, Sir Edward Harland, who had since the Conservatives entered office been created a baronet, Lord Carnarvon

delivered a speech which attracted much comment. Representing a professedly Conservative Government, he assumed that they had before them a long career of office. He made not the least allusion to Lord Spencer personally and his last visit to Belfast, but took the opportunity of reflecting on his predecessor's coercive policy. "When I came here," he said, "I did not come to tread the weary round of mere coercive repression. I came here in the hope that in reverting to the ordinary law I might beget confidence in the minds of the people of this country, and that confidence would in time engender confidence. It is early perhaps yet to speak on these subjects, but I may say this, that up to the present point I do not regret the experiment."

There was an assumption of superiority in Lord Carnarvon's tones more expressive than his words. The language itself was in contrast with Lord Spencer's utterance in the same municipal buildings about the metal of which English statesmen were made. Lord Spencer certainly appeared at that time, and until his great change, to be made of different metal from Lord Carnarvon. The new Lord Lieutenant's invidious repudiation of coercion was received somewhat coldly and with distrust. One of the leading Ulster Liberals present at the luncheon afterwards said, "Lord Carnarvon evidently considers himself a very superior person. I hope that he may not find that he is making a mistake."

From Belfast the Lord Lieutenant went on a visit to Sir Hervey Bruce at Downhill, on the coast of

North Derry. He did not pay his promised visit to the Giant's Causeway; but on returning spent some time at Hillsborough, from which castle King William on his way to the Boyne is said to have looked over the wide and beautiful expanse, stating that it was a country worth fighting for. From Hillsborough the Lord Lieutenant went to the primatial city of Armagh, which was by the new Redistribution Act about to lose its distinct representation. There he received complimentary addresses and visited the two cathedrals, the Catholic one being new, and having been visited by Lord Spencer when it was not complete. The Catholic Archbishop, the Most Rev. Dr. McGettigan, reminded the new Lord Lieutenant of Lord Spencer's visit. He said, "Your illustrious predecessor, Lord Spencer, paid a visit to this church before it was opened at all. It is a favour I can never forget from that grand nobleman who has lately left the country." Here was an opening afforded to Lord Carnarvon to say a friendly word of Lord Spencer; but, though he thanked the Archbishop for what he had said about the Queen, on his reference to the late Lord Lieutenant he was quite silent. This silence was remarked upon at the time even with some indignation. It seemed singularly ungenerous.

This visit occurred in the third week of September. The general election was imminent, and every effort was undoubtedly made by the Conservative members to secure the support of the Irish Nationalists on the impending appeal to the constituencies. Mr. Parnell, however, in the plainest language, declared that he

and his followers would be satisfied with nothing less than national independence. While many of the Conservatives boasted that they had, with Lord Randolph Churchill and Lord Carnarvon, taken a new departure in Irish policy, Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain spoke out most emphatically on their determination to maintain the Act of Union. Mr. Chamberlain's outspokenness on this question was indeed all the more significant, because he had been thought more friendly to the Nationalists than most of his colleagues in the late Government. Even while Lord Carnarvon was in Belfast, Mr. Chamberlain said at Warrington that an independent Irish Parliament would "never, never be granted."[1]

That leading Conservatives did not speak out so plainly cannot be denied. Between them and the Parnellites there was said to be a tacit understanding, and this tacit understanding was certainly not repudiated. These facts are not now brought forward in any partisan, any invidious spirit. None of the Conservative ministers had, of course, the least intention of conceding Mr. Parnell's demands. This must be unreservedly admitted; but they wished, at all events, to have the support of Mr. Parnell and his followers at the general election, for which the preparations were then being so busily made.

Just after the Lord Lieutenant had left the North of Ireland, Mr. Gladstone's address to the electors of Midlothian appeared. It had apparently been drawn

[1] Mr. Chamberlain's speech at Warrington on September 8th, 1885.

up with the most studious moderation. Ireland was avowedly left to be the last subject of his remarks. They were vague, but, from a Unionist point of view, thought to be quite satisfactory in Ulster, where they were carefully scanned. Mr. Gladstone again mentioned the civilised world, which appeared to be always in his thoughts. But he said: "To maintain the supremacy of the Crown, the unity of the Empire, and all the authority of Parliament necessary for the continuation of that unity is the first duty of every representative of the people." A sentence which followed indicated, however, that Mr. Gladstone was still advancing, not to the principle of nationalities, but "to giving," as he said, "subject to the great principle of Parliamentary control for the preservation of the supremacy of the Crown and the unity of the Empire, portions of the country enlarged powers for the management of their own affairs." Read by the light of what occurred before the year closed, Mr. Gladstone might be observed as feeling his way in the direction of his Conservative opponents. But as there was no hint of conceding an Irish Parliament, this sentence, to those who remembered the positive pledges he had given not long before to the same electors, and more recently in the House of Commons on the reduction of the Irish county franchise, excited no suspicion of a great and sudden change of policy.

We are now approaching the strangest conduct of public men and of great political parties ever known in the recent constitutional history of England. To find anything at all resembling it we might have to go

back to the days of the Cabal in the time of Charles II. It is painful to dwell upon it, but it is necessary that the truth should be told, the whole truth, and yet nothing but the truth. It is all the more painful to dwell upon it, because the great statesman who gave the signal for such an astounding change of front was the leader of the great historical Liberal party which boasted of having fixed principles, capable, indeed, of development with the progress of events and the circumstances of the time, but always remaining on a thoroughly recognised and definite line of policy in accordance with its noble political traditions. The Conservative leaders had suddenly changed on the Catholic question, and subsequently on the increased grant to Maynooth and on the repeal of the Corn Laws. Macaulay had said in the House of Commons, with great applause, when Sir Robert Peel's new policy with respect to Maynooth was announced, following the sudden alteration of his course on Catholic emancipation, that "one such change was enough for the life of one man, but that it appeared to him the right honourable baronet in these unexpected alterations of his policy was acting habitually on a system."[1] In the following year there was in the same statesman the still greater change with the repeal of the Corn Laws. But the change which was now impending was of a different character, and made in the face of declarations as solemn and as earnest as could be expressed, declarations which could not be suddenly repudiated without

[1] Speech on the Maynooth College Bill, April 14th, 1845.

seriously affecting the characters of the most eminent public men, professing the highest political morality. George Grenville's Ministry, in the early years of George III.'s reign, has been stated to be the worst that ever governed England since the Revolution. But Grenville, even in his worst acts, even when passing the unhappy Stamp Act, was sincere. He had conscientious convictions on which, as a statesman, he endeavoured to act. He did not lightly abandon those convictions; he did not say one thing during one session, and another in one immediately following; he did not say one thing while a general election was in progress, and another immediately it was over: one thing in November and another in December. This, however, was what we were now to see.

CHAPTER V

1885—1886

Obliged to be More or Less Personal—Effect of an Article—A Letter from Lord Spencer—One also from Lord Hartington—His Visit to Belfast—Formal Opening of the Ulster Reform Club—Strong Declarations against Home Rule by the late Irish Liberal Officials—The General Election and the Ulster Liberal Defeats—Mr. Gladstone still an Uncompromising Supporter of the Union—The Journalistic "Feelers" for Home Rule—A Letter and a Prophecy from Belfast—Mr. Gladstone's Reply—Alarming Rumours—Lord Hartington's Reassuring Letter—His Attitude—Meeting of Parliament—Defeat of the Government.

I NOW feel, though with great reluctance, compelled to say something of myself in connection with the sudden reversal of policy, as it affected the characters of public men with some of whom I have been on more or less friendly and even confidential terms. The subject is forced upon me. Without a reference to it, the narrative immediately following would not be so explicit and complete as, if all the truth is to be told, it seems desirable that it should be.

The unavowed alliance alleged to exist between the Irish Nationalists and the Conservatives, as the

time for the dissolution was approaching, gave more prominence to the question of the maintenance of the Union than it had possessed before the defeat of Mr. Gladstone's Government by their united forces. In the month of October I published an article on the Union. It dwelt on the impolicy of either the Liberal or Conservative party undertaking under political exigencies to repeal an Act which had up to that time been resolutely supported by the leading public men of both sides, from Mr. Canning and Charles Earl Grey through the long succession of statesmen up to and inclusive of Mr. Gladstone himself. Mr. Canning's words were quoted: "Repeal the Union! Restore the Heptarchy!"

That article was referred to in several London newspapers. With respect to it I received a letter from Lord Spencer, from whom I had during his last Irish administration met with personal kindnesses, and whose Irish policy, according to my opportunities, I had earnestly supported. Lord Spencer wrote that he had read with much attention the extracts from the article given in *Public Opinion*, that he desired to have it sent to him in its complete form, and wished me to answer certain questions on Home Rule suggested by what had then been written. In replying to this letter I did answer those questions as concisely but as directly as possible. The answers, as needs scarcely be said, were not favourable, they were the very reverse of favourable to Irish Home Rule.

The letter having been despatched in the hurry

of other affairs connected with the elections in Ulster, it passed quite out of my mind. I thought no more about it. But just at the end of the month, when Lord Hartington was expected in a few days to pay his visit to Belfast, which indisposition had prevented him from doing in the past May, I received a communication from him, stating that Lord Spencer had forwarded him my letter, that he had read it with much interest, and that he would be obliged if I would answer certain other suggested questions on Home Rule. This I at once did as well as I could. Lord Spencer and Lord Hartington, as has already been stated, were then on the most cordial terms personally and politically. Lord Hartington, as we have seen, had presided at the dinner given to the retired Irish Viceroy at the Reform Club. He had at Grimsby and other places spoken indignantly of the manner in which Lord Spencer had been treated by some of the Conservative ministers. The marquis and the earl were understood to be bosom friends. When Lord Hartington, with whom I had up to that time had no personal acquaintanceship, wrote to me, it was to one whom Lord Spencer had recommended to him as likely to give him trustworthy information on Irish and especially on Ulster affairs.

The marquis arrived in Belfast by the Barrow route four days afterwards. This was on the 5th of November, just before the dissolution of Parliament. The Conservatives affected to make merriment over the day of Lord Hartington's visit.

Why, it was asked, choose the 5th of November? Was there to be another Popish plot?

Lord Hartington was the guest of Sir Edward Cowan at Craigavad, on the county of Down side of the Belfast Lough, as he was to have been Sir Edward's guest in the preceding May. A distinguished party were invited to meet the marquis, including Lord Waveney, the President of the Ulster Liberal Society, Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, who had been the last Liberal Irish Chief Secretary, Mr. Walker, who had been the last Liberal Irish Attorney General, and The MacDermot, who had been the last Irish Solicitor General. The Ulster Reform Club was formally opened that afternoon by Lord Hartington, then generally acknowledged to be Mr. Gladstone's probable successor in the leadership of the Liberal party. All Sir Edward Cowan's guests were under such circumstances Liberals: all who attended the opening ceremony at the new Reform Club were also of course Liberals.

In consequence of the astounding events which were soon to follow, every incident of Lord Hartington's first public visit to Belfast became impressively significant and historically important. A number of addresses from deputations of the various Liberal and Tenant Right Associations of Ulster were presented. After this formal ceremony, which was not allowed to occupy much time, Lord Hartington delivered a speech which was applauded by all the members of the Club, and by all Sir Edward Cowan's guests. He dwelt especially on the

Home Rule question as it was affected by the conduct of the Conservatives in co-operating with Mr. Parnell and his party. "We are of opinion," said Lord Hartington, "that an offensive and defensive alliance has for some time existed between the Conservative party and the party led by Mr. Parnell." "It is a fact," added several Ulster Liberals. "The Conservative party," continued Lord Hartington, "have openly—I might say almost ostentatiously—given their support to Mr. Parnell and his friends on questions affecting the administration of the Irish Government, and especially in attacks which were made upon the late administration of Lord Spencer." After this sentence there was a cry of "Three cheers for Lord Spencer." They were loudly and even enthusiastically given. When they had ceased there was another cry of "Three cheers for Mr. Campbell-Bannerman." They, too, were heartily given, and the late Liberal Irish Chief Secretary, evidently much gratified, bowed his acknowledgments. Now for the first time was the word Liberal Unionist used. "We are of opinion, and I think you will be of the opinion,' said Lord Hartington, "that the real interests of the Union would be better preserved by Irish Liberal Unionist candidates than by Tory candidates, however loud, or however determined may be the latter's professions of attachment to the Union." The advice was received with approval. Every Ulster Liberal regarded himself from that time as a Liberal Unionist. These Ulster Liberal Unionists were the most earnest sup-

porters of Mr. Gladstone, to whom Lord Hartington referred in cordial and affectionate terms. Again there was enthusiastic cheering. To applaud Lord Hartington was, it was thought, to applaud Mr. Gladstone. The marquis concluded by emphatically declaring the determination of the Liberal party to maintain the Union, but not on the principles of Tory ascendency. There was no hesitation, there was no equivocation in this remarkable speech. All the old official Liberals who were present appeared thoroughly to concur in it, and amongst the members of the Club there was not one known dissentient.

In the evening there was a public banquet in the Ulster Hall. Lord Waveney, as President of the Ulster Liberal Association, presided, and Lord Hartington delivered a more elaborate address than at the Reform Club. It was equally emphatic on the policy of maintaining the Union as vital to the best interests of Great Britain and Ireland. Some of the marquis's words might be regarded as prophetic. Though he condemned the coquetting of leading Conservatives with Mr. Parnell, he thought it possible that the two great parties might one day unite in attempting to give to Ireland a broad system of local government. The statement was also received with general applause. It subsequently met with less attention than it might have done through the sudden and portentous change in the policy of the great Liberal leader, on whose attitude Lord Hartington had even then some misgivings. "I believe," said the marquis, "that the time may come when the differences which

now separate Liberals and Conservatives in Ulster may to a very great extent disappear, and that we may find ourselves fighting shoulder to shoulder in the defence of institutions and of principles which are dearer to us all than any of the political differences which have divided us." The words were met with a cry of "That's it," followed by cheers. Any new departure in Irish politics he thought would, however, lead to bitter party contests. Replying particularly to a recent manifesto of Mr. Parnell, Lord Hartington declared that before representative bodies were conceded to Ireland, the fullest guarantees ought to be given that they might not ultimately lead to a separation, and that the rights of the large, wealthy, and loyal minority should be fully protected. "The people of Ulster, and especially the Protestants of Ulster," said the marquis, "could not hope to receive absolute fair play in an assembly constituted as Ireland at present stands, which should sit in Dublin and dispose of their affairs. We cannot, I say, in honour and in justice to the inhabitants of the province of Ulster, place their properties and liberties at the absolute disposal of a national representative assembly sitting in Dublin. We want to have, I say, some guarantee not only that a separate Government will not be erected, but we want some guarantee of local justice and impartiality to all interests and to all portions equally of the kingdom of Ireland."

This was the climax of Lord Hartington's address. It was cheered to the echo by his entertainers.

The toast of the Liberal cause was immediately

afterwards proposed by the veteran Liberal, Mr. Arthur Sharman-Crawford, whom the tenant-farmers regarded with veneration as the last of William Sharman-Crawford's surviving sons. To this toast Mr. Campbell-Bannerman responded. Accepting Lord Hartington's statement that it was a Liberal policy to develop local government in Ireland, as in England and Scotland, the recent Irish Chief Secretary was equally emphatic in the expression of his determination to maintain the Union. In the course of his speech Mr. Campbell-Bannerman said: "The Liberal party to which we belong, gentlemen, has a distinct policy with regard to Ireland, as the noble lord has pointed out. It is firmly resolved in the determination to maintain the Union between the two countries, which we regard as more essential to the prosperity and well-being of Ireland than it is useful and convenient to the interests of England and Scotland." The MacDermot was also then a decided Unionist. Speaking after Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, he quoted with approbation what Mr. Gladstone had formerly said, and to which he gave an application against the Nationalists. "The social forces," said The MacDermot, "are marshalled on our side, and the banner which we now carry, though perhaps at this moment it may droop over our sinking heads, yet soon again will it float in the breeze of heaven, and it will be borne by the firm hands of a united people of the three kingdoms, to perhaps not an easy, but to a certain and not distant victory."

Then came the turn of Mr. Samuel Walker, Q.C.,

the late Irish Attorney General, and the future Home Rule Lord Chancellor. Lord Hartington had asked what message he had to take back to his English Liberal friends from the Ulster Liberals. As a Liberal member for the county of Londonderry, Mr. Walker gave the answer. "The message," he said, "his lordship may not hesitate to take back, is that the Liberals of Ireland will not permit the Union to be tampered with, and that any attempt in that direction, no matter by what party, would not be tolerated. I am speaking not only of the Ulster Liberals of the past, but it is a glorious fact that no candidate, Liberal or Tory, dares appear in Ulster without announcing his adhesion to the great Liberal principle of the Union." These declarations from The MacDermot and Mr. Walker, as those of Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, on the duty of maintaining the Union, were cheered as one man by the Liberals whom they addressed. As at the meeting in the afternoon in the Reform Club, so on that memorable evening at the Ulster Hall banquet, the speakers, from Lord Hartington down to Mr. Walker, Q.C., as well as the Ulster Liberal members present from all parts of the province, were unanimous in their adhesion to the Union.

Such were especially the declarations of the late Irish officials in Mr. Gladstone's second administration. In private they were equally decided. Most of them, like Mr. Campbell-Bannerman and Mr. Walker, being with Lord Hartington inmates of Sir Edward Cowan's mansion at Craigavad, they all met the next after-

noon at a luncheon and at an At Home in the same residence. The question of Home Rule was the constant topic of discussion. There was indeed, with the general election close at hand, no other. The addresses of the various candidates filled the advertising columns of the Ulster newspapers. Electioneering meetings were reported from all the various districts. But there was no thought of conceding Home Rule, of any possible surrender by the Liberals to the Parnellites. Lord Carnarvon's name was mentioned with scorn. The conduct of the Conservatives in not speaking out on the Home Rule question and in keeping up indirect but well-understood relations with the Irish Nationalists for electioneering objects was condemned by every recent Liberal official, as by every Ulster Liberal. As Lord Hartington smoked his cigarette on the terrace before Craigavad House, overlooking the Belfast Lough, before leaving in the evening, it was noticed that he looked very grave. But no person could imagine that the former Irish officials who had spoken at the banquet, and were then around the marquis, would in less than three months become officials in a Home Rule Government. No person could then have believed that Mr. Campbell-Bannerman would set the others the edifying example, by publicly declaring that he had found salvation in Home Rule. Never before, no never, had there been seen so sudden, so extraordinary a transformation in public men. The present Duke of Devonshire afterwards paid two other political visits to Belfast; but not as Mr.

Gladstone's first lieutenant, nor as his expected successor in the leadership of a united party devoted to the Union. He was still, however, politically what he had been in the first week of November, 1885, just before the general election.

Less than a fortnight afterwards the Parliament was dissolved. It is not necessary here to dwell on the results of the general election which followed. They are still sufficiently well known. In Ulster indeed to the Liberals, who went to the poll as determined followers of Mr. Gladstone as well as supporters of the Union, nothing could be more disastrous. They expected to lose some seats; they lost all they had gained during so many years as steadfast adherents of Mr. Gladstone's Irish policy. The Irish Nationalists, whenever Irish Liberal candidates could be defeated, joined with the Conservatives and placed them at the head of the poll. In Belfast itself, Nationalists went to the polling booths with orange cards in their hands to vote against the Liberal Mr. Workman and the Liberal Mr. Murray, and in favour of the Orange Mr. Johnston and the Orange Mr. De Cobain. For a candidate to be a follower of Mr. Gladstone was to be politically marked out for destruction.

But the Ulster Liberals made no compromise; they never thought of making a compromise. They did indeed go down with the ship, but in the heroic spirit of the soldiers of the transport *Birkenhead*, in praise of whom the Iron Duke made his last speech in the House of Lords. "My Lords," the Duke of Wellington

then said, "all the women were saved." The Ulster Liberals saved their consistency, saved their honour; they remained true to the Unionist cause, and as they thought to Mr. Gladstone: but they lost their nine seats. This loss did not generally mean a gain to the Conservatives; they only returned seventeen members to the Nationalist eighteen. The single-member divisions in Ulster operated most favourably for the Nationalists, because in many they had a numerical preponderance from being congregated in particular districts. They nearly returned Mr. Sexton as a Nationalist member for Belfast, while they were voting for Orange candidates as against the Liberals in other divisions. The confession of the leading Conservatives, that in consenting to the compromise with Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues on the recent Reform Act they had forgotten all about Ulster, was now, to the cost of all the Ulster Liberals and the Ulster Conservatives, very plainly illustrated. A number of Liberals supported Mr. C. E. Lewis in the city of Derry, and thus enabled him to defeat the Nationalist candidate, Mr. M'Carthy. In return, however, for this Liberal support of their opponent in the Maiden City, the Nationalist vote was given to Mr. Mulholland, the Conservative candidate in North Derry, and enabled him to be returned by a large majority over Mr. Walker, Mr. Gladstone's late Irish Attorney-General, who, like all Mr. Gladstone's Ulster Liberal candidates, and in accordance with what he had said at the Hartington banquet in Belfast, stood as a steadfast supporter of the Union. At the declaration

of the poll, Mr. Mulholland was loudly cheered by the Nationalists, who greeted him with the cry, "Now you will vote for Home Rule."

In the course of the contest, when the Ulster Liberal seats were being lost, Mr. Gladstone appeared still as an uncompromising Unionist. In a well-known appeal to the county electors after the contests in the boroughs were over, he called upon them to give him a decided majority, that no British statesmen might be tempted to submit to the Nationalist demands. The words are on record: they have never been explained away. Yet he had not after all much reason for dissatisfaction with the result of the general election. When the returns became fully known in December, it was found that, as the leader of the Liberal party and as a Unionist, he had nearly a majority of the whole House of Commons. He was virtually in a minority of only two over both the Conservatives and Nationalists combined.

It was observed, however, that the Nationalists had not opposed Mr. Herbert Gladstone in Leeds. He was one of the few exceptions to the systematic opposition given by them, whenever they had the opportunity, to the Liberal and Gladstonian candidates throughout the United Kingdom. In Ireland, where Mr. Gladstone, from a Liberal point of view, had during sixteen years done such great things, disestablishing the Protestant State Church, carrying the two great Land Acts, the Ballot Act, and the Franchise Act, and giving practically household

suffrage in the counties, he had not a single supporter returned. When the complete list of members in the new Parliament was published, with the Irish representatives marked C. before their names, there were over eighty with the significant N., but there was not one with an L. as signifying Liberal, or as a supporter of Mr. Gladstone. To those who had so long faithfully followed the late Prime Minister, this seemed disheartening and indeed absolutely distressing. Mr. Gladstone had been defeated by Nationalists, whom on Liberal principles he had so earnestly striven to serve. He had done for them what no other statesman could have done. And this was his reward. Well indeed might they and their agents say that there was no such thing as political gratitude. The weapon he had put into their hands, the reduced county franchise, had been by them turned against himself.

Yet the Ulster Liberals still had every confidence in their revered leader. They did not suspect that he would as a consequence of the general election, think of conceding Home Rule, and, in direct contradiction to the public pledges he had given, abandon the large, loyal, and most respectable minority to the Irish Nationalists. The elections, however, were scarcely over, when the *Pall Mall Gazette* and another Liberal newspaper, the *Leeds Mercury*, stated that Mr. Gladstone was willing to co-operate with the Government in carrying for Ireland a comprehensive Local Government Bill. After a Cabinet Council in the middle of December, when it became known that

Lord Salisbury and his colleagues would as a Government meet the new Parliament, these statements became more definite. The ministerial *Standard* and the Press Association went so far as to assert that Mr. Gladstone was willing to concede, subject to full Imperial control, a domestic Parliament for Ireland, with a veto on Irish measures, to be exercised under the advice of an Irish minister. The air became full of rumours. In Ulster to the whole Unionist population, Liberal and Conservative, these rumours caused much alarm and anxiety. The fact that Mr. Herbert Gladstone represented Leeds, and that it was in the *Leeds Mercury* the reports of this great change in Mr. Gladstone's mind were most persistent, caused even the most enthusiastic admirers of the Liberal statesman in Ulster to consider whether there might not be in them some foundation of truth.

Under the circumstances, as I had at other times been honoured with several communications from Mr. Gladstone respecting Irish affairs, late one night I wrote him a letter, calling his attention to the statements which were daily becoming more specific. I said that, as he had formerly expressed some respect for my political opinions, I hoped he would excuse me if at such a critical time I ventured to approach him on the rumours respecting his alleged intentions with respect to Irish Home Rule. I presumed to say that if he adopted this policy he would break up the Liberal party, that he would find the problem an insoluble one, and that if there were any attempt to

force a Home Rule Act on Ulster against the wishes of the loyal population, the ultimate result would be a civil war. These were my convictions, expressed, I hope, with becoming diffidence and respect for one whom I had so long admired and honoured, and for whom, for many years, I had done what I could, in a comparatively humble position, politically to serve.

I had not long to wait for an answer. The reply was not marked private, and seemed scarcely intended to be private. It may now be regarded as having some historical significance. After certain kindly and complimentary observations, Mr. Gladstone said: "You may rely upon it that in this grave matter I shall not speak or act except with full consideration. In the meantime, I may refer you to my telegram of Saturday, which is, I see, in this morning's London papers."

The telegram to which Mr. Gladstone here referred was to the effect that if he should have at any time a plan or an intention to deal with the Irish Government, it would be on his own responsibility, and not announced in anonymous and irresponsible declarations. Political friends were also assured in this telegram that Mr. Gladstone fully remembered his obligations to them, and might safely understand that he was bound by none of the ideas put forward in his name.

This was a disclaimer of any of the schemes attributed to the Liberal leader. But it was scarcely a disclaimer of an intention at some subsequent time of dealing with the subject. There

was no disclaimer of any such intention in the letter I received, and, as directed, read by the light of the telegram published just before the communication was written. Instead of a disclaimer there appeared to be an admission : "You may rely upon it that in this grave matter I shall not speak or act except with full consideration."

From this time I never doubted that Mr. Gladstone had decided on bringing in an Irish Home Rule Bill. It was my duty, indeed, without specific information to the contrary, to put on the communication the construction most favourable to his old Liberal and anti-Home Rule policy. But I felt many misgivings, which I did not at least conceal from one confidential friend, Sir Edward Cowan. On going down to Craigavad on the following Sunday I met Sir Edward in the library, where Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. Samuel Walker, and other former Liberal officials had sat a short time before round Lord Hartington, and showed themselves such uncompromising Unionists. I somewhat startled my host by my abrupt declaration, "Edward, politics are a vile trade."

"What is the matter?"

"Gladstone has gone over to the Home Rulers."

"Impossible! Absurd! I have received a letter from my friend Mr. Campbell-Bannerman assuring me that there is no truth in those rumours."

"But I wrote to Mr. Gladstone himself about those rumours, and this is his reply."

I put Mr. Gladstone's letter in Sir Edward's hands. He read it slowly and then hesitated to speak.

"What do you think of it?" I asked.

"I must candidly say that I do not like it."

"Nor I. It means to us utter ruin."

"Well," added Sir Edward, "keep the letter to yourself. Say nothing about it; and, above all, do not let any one have the opportunity of taking a copy of it."

As the year 1885 was ending the anxiety of the Ulster Unionists increased. When so many conjectures were being indulged in, a letter from Lord Hartington was published in which he stated plainly that he retained his convictions against Home Rule, and knew nothing of any intention to act in a contrary spirit. This straightforward statement on his part reassured the Ulster Liberals, who had so recently entertained him both as a Liberal and a Unionist. It did not, however, escape their notice that he had at an unusual time gone up to London, and had had a long interview with Mr. Goschen and at least one other political friend. The Conservatives of Ulster began to hold meetings in favour of the Union. These the Liberals were invited to attend, but, just after they had lost all their Ulster representatives, the appeal received no very hearty response.

The meeting of the new Parliament for business on January 21st, 1886, was looked forward to with the deepest interest. Though only a few weeks had passed away since the general election, a new and utterly unexpected state of things had appeared. The attitude of parties, the intentions of public men, the questions at issue, seemed to have changed since

the new Parliament had been chosen, and before it had actually met. Nothing more was heard about authorised or unauthorised programmes on which the Liberals had appealed to the constituencies. The Government was defeated on an amendment of Mr. Jesse Collings, regretting the omission from the Queen's Speech of any intention to deal with the allotment question. But Home Rule was in the thoughts of all the members: they said one thing and did another. The Nationalists, who had supported the Conservatives at the general election, now voted with Mr. Gladstone and the Liberals, on the confident assurance, said to have been given by well-known go-betweens, and especially by Captain O'Shea, that Mr. Gladstone and his party would become the supporters of a Home Rule policy and the introducers in a new ministry of an Irish Home Rule Bill. Lord Hartington at least maintained his consistency, his honour, all that is meant by high character in a public man. While there was so much uncertainty, when there seemed an atmosphere of insincerity and inconsistency all round, and public men appeared to be contradicting themselves and each other, in Ulster among the Unionists congratulations were exchanged on having one statesman in whose attitude there was no equivocation, no sudden change of front.

The Conservatives had recently been far from satisfied with their own leaders. Though they had accepted Nationalist aid to defeat their Liberal opponents, they, like those Liberals, contemplated the

future with many misgivings. They, too, began to look wistfully to Lord Hartington as a public man on whom they could depend.

The defeat of the Government on Tuesday, the 27th January, was not regarded with any satisfaction by the Ulster Liberals. They could not indeed believe that Mr. Gladstone would abandon his recent pledges and contradict what had appeared to have been the whole tenour of his life. But it was obvious that the Liberal party, which had placed the ministry in a minority with the aid of the Irish Nationalist votes, would in office be at the mercy of Mr. Parnell and his followers. Mr. Gladstone, it seemed, was about to do what at the time of the general election he had asked the British electors to come to his aid and enable him not to do. He asked them to save him from Nationalist temptation: to that temptation he was now about to yield.

CHAPTER VI

1886

The Home Rule Ministry—Lord O'Hagan on Mr. Morley—Mr. Gladstone's Address—Liberal Convention in Belfast—Lord Randolph Churchill's Visit—The Home Rule Bill Coupled with the Land Bill—Resignation of Mr. Trevelyan and Mr. Chamberlain—Mr. Bright's Opinion as given to the Belfast Deputation—Excitement on the Introduction of the Home Rule Bill—Objections to the Bill on the part of the Minority —"Sixty miles of sea"—The Supplementary Land Bill—Interviews with Lord Spencer, Lord Hartington, and Mr., afterwards Sir, George Trevelyan.

THE constitution of the new ministry was a subject of much interest in Ulster, and especially to those who on Unionist principles had been Mr. Gladstone's staunchest supporters. It was soon known that Lord Spencer would not return to Ireland as the Lord Lieutenant, but that he would have a high post in the Cabinet. He was still believed to be on the most intimate and confidential terms with his friend Lord Hartington, and it was difficult to understand, if the marquis remained out of the Government, how Lord Spencer could go in. Lord Aberdeen, who was announced to be the new Lord Lieutenant, was quite

unknown in Ireland, and indeed politically anywhere else. For some time it was thought to be not unlikely that Mr. Chamberlain would be the Irish Chief Secretary; but he was said to have recommended Mr. Parnell, or, failing him, Mr. Healy, for what had become a very invidious office.

When Mr. John Morley accepted the place, he was personally as little known in Ireland as the Earl of Aberdeen. As editor of the *Fortnightly Review* in recent years he had written articles on that country of what was thought to be a very extreme character. One of those contributions made its appearance just before I was on a short visit to Lord O'Hagan at Woodlands, near Dublin, soon after Mr. Gladstone's last administration had been formed, and when Lord O'Hagan had himself for a short time returned to the Irish Lord Chancellorship. He came to me with the number of the *Fortnightly* in his hand containing Mr. Morley's article. "Really, really," he said, "this is very distressing. The writer gives Liberal Governments no credit for anything they have done or attempted to do. He sneers at the establishment of the Encumbered Estates Court, and all the reforms which have been recently carried. He does not even give Mr. Gladstone and his old colleagues any praise whatever." It did not then occur to Lord O'Hagan, nor any one else, that Mr. Morley would be the Irish Chief Secretary in Mr. Gladstone's next Government, and that this Government would be a Home Rule one. Such a notion would have been indignantly scouted as a wild dream, as an extravagant impossibility, a pre-

posterous slander only worthy of Irish Tories. Yet Lord O'Hagan was an Irish Catholic, a Liberal, and in thorough sympathy with Irish reforms, and with all that had hitherto been understood to be Mr. Gladstone's Irish remedial policy. That excellent man had died not long before this great leap to Nationalism on the part of the Liberal leader and of so many members of his party. He knew all the danger of conceding the demands of Mr. Parnell and his followers. That he would have approved of this sudden change of front on the part of Mr. Gladstone I do not believe. To suppose so would be contrary to all he said to me in the most confidential intercourse of many years. He had mercifully been taken away from witnessing what he would have deeply regretted.

Mr. Morley was apparently chosen Irish Chief Secretary because he had expressed what were called more advanced views with regard to Ireland than any other prominent member of the Liberal party. But it is right even from a Unionist point of view that justice should be done to the new Irish Chief Secretary. Though at one time he did not appear to be in favour of granting Home Rule, his more recent writings and speeches obviously tended in that direction. He was regarded with favour by the Irish Nationalists; they had not opposed his last election for Newcastle-on-Tyne. He, like Mr. Herbert Gladstone, had been exempted from Mr. Parnell's proscription. It could not be said of him, as of so many other members of the Liberal party, that he had changed his opinions in favour of Home Rule only after Mr. Gladstone had

changed his. His course had been much more consistent, much more defensible. He had not, like Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, been in Ulster just before the general election a devoted supporter of the Union, and soon afterwards in Scotland declared himself a thorough Home Ruler on the highest Christian principles. He had not, like even a still more eminent official Liberal, Mr. Gladstone's late Home Secretary, and the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, taunted the Conservatives with stewing in the Parnellite juice, only two months afterwards to plunge head over ears in it himself. Mr. Morley's position was far more intelligible and even far more respectable. And so it has ever since been.

Early in February the new Government may be said to have been completed. In announcing his intentions on accepting office, Mr. Gladstone issued a short address, which in a small degree seemed to reassure some of the Ulster Liberals and the Unionists generally. He said: "I see no cause to modify any of the leading declarations of my last address, either on pending subjects of British legislation or on the basis and necessary limits of the policy for Ireland." It was added that in Ireland there was "a widely prevalent desire for self-government extending beyond what is felt in Great Britain as to local affairs; bu necessarily subject in all respects to the laws of Imperial unity."

This scarcely seemed to foreshadow any Home Rule Bill which would meet the demands of the Irish Nationalists, nor the surrender of the loyal

minority to the mercies of an Irish Parliament, in which they would, under the most favourable circumstances, be outnumbered by three to one. In Belfast there was soon afterwards a convention of Liberal delegates to consider the new policy which was being adopted by the great Liberal leader. There was as yet a great deal of wavering. It was hard in those who had so long and at considerable sacrifices been Mr. Gladstone's enthusiastic followers in Ulster to believe that he was about to contradict what appeared to them to be positive pledges against any Home Rule Bill on Irish Nationalist principles, against any measure which would logically and inevitably lead to a separation between the two countries. The result of this important meeting in Belfast showed a decided division among those who had hitherto been Mr. Gladstone's supporters; but the majority were opposed to associating together a Land Bill and a Home Rule Bill, or to any measure interfering with the Union.

In his letter to me, Mr. Gladstone had said that I could rely upon it that on so grave a matter he would not speak or act except with full consideration. This was written on the 21st of December. In the February immediately following, just before the Belfast Liberal convention, it was, however, well understood that his first act as Prime Minister would be to draw up an Irish Home Rule Bill, which it was said would be accompanied by a comprehensive Land Bill, especially framed in the interests of the Irish landlords in order that they might be saved from

confiscation by an Irish Parliament. Mr. Gladstone had, however, no scheme ready for dealing with either question. He asked for delay.

In the interim, Lord Randolph Churchill visited the North of Ireland, and was enthusiastically received by the Conservatives. The language which he had used in the last summer against Lord Spencer as a Coercionist was, however, not forgotten by the Ulster Liberals. They looked upon him very coldly. But he did all he could to encourage resistance to a measure of Home Rule. Against such a policy he said that in the last resort Ulster would fight and that Ulster would be right.

Cabinet Council after Cabinet Council was being held. In March it was understood that the Prime Minister had laid his plans before his colleagues. It was reported that he had presented no fewer than nine different drafts of a Home Rule Bill. One scheme was said to be framed on the idea Lord John Russell had broached when the Repeal agitation was dying out, with its great leader, of creating four different councils for the four provinces of Ireland; another was to give Ulster a separate Parliament of its own; another, though it was not generally believed to be Mr. Gladstone's, was to annex Ulster, or at least the loyalist part of Ulster, what the Nationalists opprobriously called the north-east corner, to Scotland. The Bill, however, which Mr. Parnell and his followers were, it is said, determined on having, and had communicated that determination indirectly to Mr. Gladstone, was to be based on one Parliament to be

held in Dublin to administer all Irish affairs. In contemplating such a scheme as this last, muttered threats of resistance began to be heard in Ulster, and some of them came not from Tories nor from Orangemen, but from Liberals who had received Lord Hartington so enthusiastically a few short months before as Mr. Gladstone's probable successor in the leadership of what was then a Liberal Unionist party.

With the Home Rule Bill, however, it might be settled, was to be coupled a Land Bill. They were to be regarded as inseparable, as each a part of the great scheme of Irish self-government. As the days passed on, it was stated that in the Land Bill would be a proposal to advance a hundred and fifty millions for the buying out of the landlords, Mr. Gladstone and Lord Spencer both being of the very decided opinion that an Irish Parliament could not be trusted to deal equitably with the land question.

No sooner had these reports obtained consistency than the rumour came that Mr. Trevelyan and Mr. Chamberlain had placed their resignations as members of the Cabinet in Mr. Gladstone's hands. They might, it was said, be prepared to accept a Home Rule Bill as a distinct measure, or a Land Bill as a distinct measure, but to propose to grant an independent Irish Parliament, while at the same time advancing so enormous a sum for the buying out of the Irish landlords, and allowing this Irish Parliament to administer so gigantic a scheme, seemed to them utterly preposterous and even ridiculous. It was afterwards stated that

Mr. Gladstone had requested his two colleagues to retain their offices at least until he had the opportunity in a fortnight, and before the Easter holidays, of laying his great plan of Irish reform before the House of Commons. They who still confidently believed in Mr. Gladstone's powers of statesmanship declared that his Home Rule Bill, with its supplementary Land Bill, would, when developed in the House of Commons, show the most marvellous faculty for constructive legislation, and outdo all his previous performances during his long political and ministerial career.

This was, however, not the conviction of the members of the deputation from the Liberal convention in Belfast. They had been appointed to have interviews with leading public men in London on the great question which had never been placed before the country at the last general election, but which now, by Mr. Gladstone's sudden conversion, had absorbed all others. They saw Lord Hartington, Mr. Chamberlain, Sir Henry James, Mr. Bright; but Mr. Gladstone had courteously declined an interview with the deputation, composed of representatives of his old Ulster supporters. To the deputation the most outspoken public man was Mr. Bright. He made no secret of his opposition to Mr. Gladstone's new policy, and to the manner in which it was being forced upon the country. "Gentlemen," he said, "in all this to me there seems something almost incomprehensible."

When Mr. Chamberlain retired from the Government, accompanied by Mr. Trevelyan, the step had Mr. Bright's full approval. Strange to say, however,

Mr. Gladstone had expected the great Free Trade orator and, as he was called, Popular Tribune to concur in his new Irish policy. I was afterwards told by a Manchester merchant, who was a brother of one of the most prominent founders of the Ulster Reform Club, that not long before his death, when on a visit to Manchester, Mr. Bright stated to his host that he had seen the Home Rule Bill when it was nearly ready to be introduced into the House of Commons, and that it then contained several provisions, afterwards expunged, giving an Irish Parliament power to deal with the Customs duties, with fiscal questions generally, and with protective impositions for purposes of revenue. I cannot answer for the correctness of those statements; but they were at least made to me on good authority, an authority in which I had and have every confidence.

Another statement was made to me by one of Mr. Gladstone's colleagues. Knowing as he did the difficulty of dealing with Home Rule in any Bill, he advised Mr. Gladstone to proceed by resolution. This course might have been taken, but there was a serious difficulty in the way. When a Conservative Government had proposed dealing with a great question by resolution, Mr. Gladstone had strongly condemned such a proceeding as throwing on the House of Commons the duty of framing a measure which ought to be brought forward on the sole responsibility of the ministers. Mr. Gladstone quickly took down a volume of Hansard, and read his former condemnation of laying the foundations of a

great measure by resolution. "After having thus spoken, sir," asked Mr. Gladstone, "can I proceed by resolution?" His colleague, a high official with a personal knowledge of Ireland, was silenced.

The day fixed for the introduction of the Home Rule Bill was Thursday, the 8th April. As the time arrived, the interest taken in the development of the scheme by the veteran statesman in his seventy-seventh year was unprecedented. In Ulster, at least, the excitement was at its highest pitch. On the evening when the measure was developed, even the morning papers published editions containing Mr. Gladstone's speech at intervals as it was transmitted through the telegraphic wires, and large crowds assembled round the newspaper offices eagerly buying copies. It is not necessary here to dwell in any detail on a measure which, though Mr. Gladstone for a year afterwards boasted that it still kept the field, soon ceased to be regarded, even by its author, as an existing scheme of legislation. It was at once seen in no respect to justify the anticipation that it would turn out to be a noble work of constructive legislation, worthy of its illustrious framer. Some of its provisions were singularly crude, and indeed utterly unworkable. They appear to have been adopted hastily, to meet objections both from members of the Cabinet and the Irish Nationalists, whose demands, it was very evident, every effort had been made to meet. The most important provision was the very reverse of that contained in the subsequent measure seven years afterwards. It is best given in Mr. Gladstone's

own words. He said: "The proposal I have sketched is that we should pass an Act giving to Ireland an enormous boon, a statutory Parliament having the control of Irish affairs both legislative and administrative; but one of the provisions of the Act is the withdrawal of Irish representative peers from the House of Lords and of Irish members from the House of Commons." How strangely those words sound now! Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues had not yet reconciled themselves, as they subsequently did, to allowing the Irish members, who were to be doubled in the proposed Irish Parliament, to have not only a full control over Irish affairs, legislative and administrative as the Prime Minister said, but also to the number of eighty to sit in the House of Commons at Westminster, and virtually to have a full control over English, Scotch, and Imperial affairs.

In Ulster, however, the part of the Bill which was most severely scrutinised was not the proposal to exclude the Irish members from the existing House of Commons, but the provisions to secure the rights of the minority. To such proposals Mr. Gladstone was, as it was stated, pledged "up to the hilt." He said, however, very little about the protection of the minority in his speech, and on examination the guarantees were found by those to whom they were of vital importance to be utterly illusory. They consisted in the creation of a first order of seventy-five members, elected by a constituency of rated occupiers of twenty-five pounds and upwards. It was at once

said that if every one of these seventy-five members voted with the minority when they were in one chamber, the Ulster Unionists and the Unionists in other parts of the country would still be hopelessly outnumbered, and that when the two orders sat in separate chambers a veto of the one to continue only to a dissolution or until three years would be very little restraint indeed on the larger body, which would generally be animated with bitter hostility to the Unionists because they were loyal and devoted to the British connection. Even with the addition of the Irish peers in the first order, if they chose to accept the privilege offered them, which was most improbable, the minority would still, it was thought, have no efficient protection. The doubling of the number of Irish members in the other order, or allowing them to be 202 instead of 103, only made the position of the minority more desperate from the Ulster point of view.

Mr. Gladstone seemed to admit this fact. Though he brought forward no plans to effect the object, he was willing, he said, to consider one to constitute a separate Ulster or part of Ulster. His language was not free from ambiguity on this point as on several others; but this was the meaning drawn from it, and not denied by himself.

Very soon, if not immediately, the judges, with the exception of those of the Court of Exchequer, the members of the civil service, and the police were all to be under the control of this Irish Parliament. There was still to be a fiscal unity between the

two islands: and it was proposed that Ireland should contribute one fifteenth to the Imperial revenue.

Such was the Bill as expounded by Mr. Gladstone. It was read with dismay by the Protestants and the more respectable Catholics of Ulster. "It is," said a distinguished municipal official in Belfast, "a tremendous measure!" A philosophical Liberal, who has been before mentioned, Mr. Joseph John Murphy, again put the question, "Is Mr. Gladstone mad?" The Ulster Unionists, Liberal and Conservative, and indeed nearly all who had anything to lose, suddenly felt the very foundations on which they stood sinking beneath their feet. The feeling of consternation resembled that in Paris on that memorable Sunday in the August of 1870, when it was known that the Germans had gained their first successes over the French, and that the Emperor Napoleon found his communications interrupted. "All can be restored," he wrote; but the people of Paris intuitively felt that their line of defence on the frontier was broken, and that there would be very little effective opposition to the march of the victorious Germans to the brilliant capital. The Unionists of Ulster had not been beaten by a foreign enemy. In a moment they found themselves apparently left defenceless and handed over by the statesman in whom many of them had trusted to a hostile Nationalist majority, from whom they could expect no consideration, and by whom their very loyalty would be regarded as treason to that Irish nationality which has not and

never had any impelling, any animating object but hatred of England and of everything English.

One of the reasons the Prime Minister gave for this surrender to the men whom he had not long before denounced as marching through rapine to the dismemberment of the Empire was that sixty miles of sea rolled between Great Britain and Ireland. Quoting Grattan, who had said that the channel forbade union as the ocean forbade separation, Mr. Gladstone said, just before the close of his speech, "Do what you will with your steamers and your electrical telegraph, can you make the channel cease to exist, or to be as if it did not exist? These sixty miles of sea may appear but little; but I ask you, what are the twenty miles of sea between England and France?" He was met by cries of "the Channel Tunnel." Not deterred by this interruption, he went on to say that there had been even jealousy of the Thames Tunnel.

In the North of Ireland this language, as reported in the newspapers, was read with blank amazement. That it should be used, almost in the last decade of the nineteenth century, by him who was supposed to be the most progressive and enlightened of statesmen seemed almost incredible. It was said "What would Mr. Gladstone reply to a proposal to divide Scotland by the Firth of Forth? He is a Scotch member, a member for Midlothian, and yet, though he may know all about the Greek islands and the Greek cities in the time of Homer, he does not now know the geography between Scotland and Ireland."

This was literally said. Subsequently, as will be shown, it was repeated with details to Mr. Gladstone himself. The Scotch coast, as Mr. Chamberlain afterwards saw, is distinctly visible from Larne harbour, where there is an old castle of the Bruces, and whence there is the short sea passage to Stranraer. From the more northern parts of the Antrim coast all visitors to the watering-place of Portrush and the Giant's Causeway can see with the naked eye the isles of Islay and Jura. Scotland and the North of Ireland, both physically and morally, are closely linked together. The Bruces early in the fourteenth century did not regard the few miles of sea between Scotland and Ireland as an insuperable obstacle against the union of the two countries. It was on the Irish isle of Rathlin, close to the Scotch coast, that Robert Bruce took refuge and saw the spider and the web. It was there, too, that on Irish soil he built another castle, which even in ruins still bears his name.

Three days after the introduction of the Home Rule Bill Mr. Gladstone in another speech explained his Irish Land Bill. It excited, however, no enthusiasm among his most thoroughgoing supporters, and may be said, in fact, to have been dead born. Although in deference to the remonstrance of some of his colleagues, and particularly of Mr. Chamberlain, who had left the Government, the sum it was proposed in the first three years to advance for buying out the Irish landlords was limited to fifty millions, it was fully

understood that another hundred and thirty millions would probably be required to render the process complete. For this something might be said on broad grounds of public policy had it been proposed in an independent measure, while the Parliament and Government of the United Kingdom were to remain as they were. But the Irish Nationalist members did not like the Bill because it was thought to offer to the landlords too favourable terms, and the Unionist tenant farmers in Ulster, though very favourable to land purchase with the money of the State, looked with great distrust on a loan coupled with Irish Home Rule, which, as they instinctively knew, would not be to them Home Rule at all.

The principle of the measure, which was plainly declared by Mr. Gladstone to be a landlords' one, was to carry out land purchase according to the scale fixed by the judicial rents. But as several years had passed since those judicial rents were fixed, complaints were being already raised that they were too high. When Mr. Gladstone announced that the normal rate of purchase would be twenty years, the statement was received with murmurs from the Irish Nationalists. These increased when he said that there were exceptional estates of which the maximum was twenty-two years' purchase. The tenants were to pay 4 per cent. on the purchase-money for forty-nine years. With them, except in the case of holdings at and under a rental of £4, purchase was to be compulsory; but the sale on the part of the landlord was to be optional. Then the

new Irish Parliament was to appoint a State authority to stand between the selling landlord and the purchasing tenant. It was at once seen in Ulster what this meant when interpreted by the Prime Minister's express avowal that his object was to set up a Nationalist Government, exclusively to administer Irish laws to be passed by an Irish Legislature, in which one party would necessarily and inevitably be all-powerful.

Mr. Parnell objected strongly to the proposal to appoint a receiver-general for the collection of revenue from Irish resources. It showed, he said, distrust of the new Irish Parliament and Government before they were set up. Mr. Healy, too, just before the debate concluded and the Bill was allowed without a division to be read a first time, said that it was proposed to give the money of the taxpayers to the guzzlers of turtle-soup and champagne in the London companies. During the preceding session of Parliament an improved Land Purchase Bill had been passed with the assent of both parties. But whatever agreement there was on the question of purchase, it was strongly felt in Ulster that this gigantic Land Bill, as associated with a Home Rule measure, was utterly unacceptable. It was said: "The Irish Nationalists are told that they shall not have the Home Rule Bill unless they accept the Land Bill, and the Irish landlords and tenants who are not Nationalists are told that they shall not have the Land Bill unless they accept the Home Rule Bill. The difficulty has been deliberately and even voluntarily created."

With this dilemma staring them in the face, Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues adjourned Parliament until after the Easter holidays. During that time it was seen with some astonishment that Lord Spencer appeared with Mr. Morley at Newcastle-on-Tyne as a speaker in favour of Irish Home Rule. Both ministers maintained that it would be quite impracticable, as Mr. Chamberlain appeared to recommend, to have Irish members in a Parliament of their own in Dublin, and also sitting in the House of Commons at Westminster. This was, strange to say, the one point on which many of the Ulster Unionists agreed with Lord Spencer and Mr. Morley. On the very evening when Mr. Gladstone developed his Home Rule Bill, and as soon as its details were known, it was written in Belfast and published the next morning: "The Irish members are to be confined to the Irish Parliament. They are not to be Irish members here and Imperial members at Westminster. To allow them to make laws for Ireland and then to go over to London to obstruct legislation in order to obtain other Nationalist concessions from the ministers there would be most absurd, indefensible, and preposterous." Not an Ulster Liberal, not an Ulster Conservative did not agree with this emphatic expression of opinion. From that opinion as published by me on April 9th, 1886, I have never varied, nor have generally the Ulster Unionists.

Very soon after the Easter recess I paid my usual May visit to London. The day fixed for the debate on the second reading of the Home Rule Bill, which

would probably decide the fate of the measure and of the ministry, was approaching. The opposition to allowing the Irish members to be disassociated altogether from the Parliament at Westminster had increased. It was stated that the ministers were prepared to give way on this question and to do what Mr. Gladstone had, in introducing the measure, said it would be most unjust to do, that is, to allow the Irish members to have their own Parliament, and also to sit and vote in the House of Commons with the English and Scotch members.

As Lord Spencer had been personally friendly and obliging to me, I waited upon him, as requested, at Spencer House, in St. James's Place, overlooking the Park. It was the first time that I had met this nobleman since as Lord Lieutenant he had been entertained in Belfast, and had declared that if the extreme Nationalists thought that they could intimidate British statesmen from performing their duty in Ireland, they mistook the metal of which those statesmen were made. The interview was at first somewhat embarrassing. The Red Earl, as the Nationalists used to call him, made no effort to excuse or to defend his inconsistency. All he said was, "I admit that I have changed my opinion." He did not say, what he might have said, that on retiring from office he had been attacked by Conservative members for having resolutely administered the last Coercion Act, and therefore he had come to the conclusion that a coercive policy was no longer possible. But the third Irish measure of the session

was another Peace Preservation Bill, which it was thought might be permitted to pass with the Home Rule Bill and the Land Bill. I ventured to say to Lord Spencer that Mr. Gladstone had introduced his Home Rule Bill without consulting the country on this policy at the recent general election, when the dissolution as a consequence of his reform measures was virtually his own. The earl admitted the fact. I added that the country had been unprepared for any such measure. This fact he also admitted. He asked me what was thought of the Bill in Ulster. I said that it had caused general dismay, and that it was considered, from the point of view of the Unionists, as bad as it could possibly be. I added, however, that if we were to have a Home Rule Bill, the exclusion of the Irish members from the British House of Commons was the only logical course to take. "I am glad to see you agree with us on this point," Lord Spencer observed. On leaving I said, "I am very sorry, Lord Spencer, that I cannot state pleasant things; but I am sure you will pardon me telling you on this important question what I conscientiously think and believe." "Oh, yes," he said very graciously, and so I sorrowfully took my leave.

Between Spencer House and Devonshire House there is but a short distance. It was but a walk up St. James's Street, and crossing Piccadilly. On the same morning, by his invitation, I called on Lord Hartington. The interview was almost as strange by its very contrast as that with Lord Spencer.

Singularly enough, too, the first question the marquis asked me was, "Have you seen Lord Spencer?" I said that I had seen Lord Spencer.

"When?"

"This very morning. I have just come from Spencer House here."

"I am glad you have seen Lord Spencer," said the marquis with great emphasis. His meaning could not be misunderstood. It implied that from the very person whom the earl had only last autumn recommended to him before he visited Ulster as one whom he could trust for correct information on Ulster affairs, the late Liberal Lord Lieutenant now disagreed as much as it was possible to do on that very subject of Home Rule referred to in the letter sent to Lord Hartington before crossing over to Belfast. I said, "I am glad, at all events, Lord Hartington, that you remain in the same opinions as you expressed in Belfast."

"Yes," he said, significantly, "I do not change my opinions so easily as some people do."

"Nor do the Ulster Liberals whom you addressed on the 5th of last November."

"What do they think of the Home Rule Bill?"

"They think that it is an absolute surrender to the Nationalists."

"For some time," said Lord Hartington, "I suspected that Gladstone had these ideas."

"I mentioned to you, Lord Hartington, at Craigavad, that the Ulster Unionists might prefer civil war to accepting a Home Rule Bill which would hand

them over to an Irish Parliament in which they would have no real influence. You said to Sir Edward Cowan that you did not believe that statement to be true. The feeling that such a measure ought to be resisted at all sacrifices is gathering strength."

The marquis hesitated. "The Bill," he said, "will not pass."

Very soon after this interview I was invited by Mr. Trevelyan to have a conversation with him one morning at his house. His father was still living, but was known to be in delicate health. From the circumstances which soon afterwards followed, every incident, almost every word of that interview has ever since remained even painfully present to my mind. I said that I could account for Mr. Gladstone's change of opinion on the Home Rule question, but that Lord Spencer's puzzled me to the extreme. "You, Mr. Trevelyan, who have been with Lord Spencer in his last Irish Government, may explain what to me is so mysterious." "Oh," was the reply, "I suppose he wants to be Prime Minister or something." Mr. Trevelyan said of his recent Irish colleague what I forbear quoting. He then took up a little pet dog and hurried with it out of the room. After a considerable amount of conversation on Irish affairs he stated that he was going to the Devonshire Club, where I was staying, and that if I pleased he would drive me up. On the way he was very communicative. He said that in the event of the Home Rule Bill being defeated in the House of Commons, there would be of course another general election.

"I know," he said, "I shall lose my seat for the Hawick Burghs; but I shall not regret the loss. I can return into private life, and give two or three years to the management of my estate. This will, after all, be better than being in the House of Commons. I thought of making my son a professional politician, but I now think of putting him to some business in the city. That is surely much better. See what Mr. Gladstone has made of me."

As we were ascending St. James's Street, Mr. Trevelyan added: "After all, it is not the Home Rule question as it affects Ireland that so much concerns me: it is the precedent set for India. You know, of course, how my family have been connected with India?" I said that I was well acquanted with the fact. "Home Rule," he stated, on mounting the steps of the club, "would be worse for India than for Ireland."

Mr. Trevelyan was evidently very ill at ease. He appeared to feel deeply the position in which he was placed and not at all to like it. But he spoke as earnestly as any other Liberal Unionist against Mr. Gladstone and the Home Rule Bill. All his sympathies, as I understood, were with Lord Hartington. He was regarded as one of the marquis's most resolute followers.

CHAPTER VII

1886

Mr. Gladstone's Motion for the Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill — An Interview with Mr. Chamberlain — His Decisive Opinions—Preparations for Resistance in Ulster—Lord Wolseley—Fall in the Ulster Stocks—The Defeat of the Bill—How the News was Received in Ulster—Belfast Riots—Language Ascribed to Mr. Morley by the Nationalist Press—A Dinner—The Belfast Merchants and Manufacturers nearly all against Home Rule—The Irish Chief Secretary's Statements—Another Protest of the Irish General Assembly against Home Rule—A Threatened Struggle between the Irish Races Averted by the Results of the General Election and the Formation of a new Government.

In reply to Mr. Gladstone's motion for the second reading, Lord Hartington himself moved that the Bill should be rejected. I was present that evening of Monday, May the 10th, in the House of Commons. It was still said that Mr. Gladstone was willing to make concessions on the question of retaining the Irish members. On this point he spoke with bated breath and with some ambiguity. On questions of taxation, Mr. Gladstone was understood to say that the Irish members might vote in the British Parliament, and that on Imperial questions there might be something of a joint committee, but that any proposals of this

character could not be made before the Bill was read a second time. They never assumed any definite shape.

On another point which was regarded with intense interest in Ulster Mr. Gladstone was silent. In introducing his measure, as has been seen, in a vague way he expressed his readiness to consider any scheme for protecting the minority by giving Ulster, or part of Ulster, a separate government. In his speech on moving the second reading of the Bill there was no renewal of this offer. The explanation given to me was that Mr. Labouchere, who acted, it was said, as the go-between of Mr. Parnell and Mr. Gladstone, had on the previous Saturday waited on the Prime Minister, and told him that Mr. Parnell and his party would never consent to leave Ulster out of the Irish Parliament and Government, that they would have all Ireland, or none at all. This may, or may not, have been true: the statement, however, came from a very well-informed source, and may be taken for what it is worth. Lord Hartington's speech in opposing the second reading was from a Unionist point of view unanswerable. His reference to Mr. Gladstone's surrender to the men against whom he had not long before publicly said that the resources of civilisation were not exhausted was in that vein of grave irony in which he excels.

After the marquis had resumed his seat, Mr. Wm. O'Brien followed. His speech was full of the usual Irish Nationalist assertions. But it appeared greatly to delight the Prime Minister. He held his hand to his ear and smiled benignantly at the editor of

United Ireland, who, it seems, had now much more weight with him than his recent colleague, Lord Hartington. To those who had seen Mr. Gladstone's attitude to the Irish Nationalists during his former Government, and only a very short time before, the contrast was strange and even painful. Mr. O'Brien was still the same man. He had not changed: Mr. Gladstone had.

While the fate of the Bill was still in suspense, I had been introduced to Mr. Chamberlain one evening at the Devonshire Club. At his request I had afterwards a long conversation with him on the measure and on Ulster politics, at his private residence in Prince's Gardens, South Kensington. I stated frankly that on the question of the Irish members having both a domestic Parliament of their own, and the power of voting in the House of Commons with the English and Scotch members, I disagreed with some of the views he had been understood to hold. "We may not, however," said Mr. Chamberlain, "disagree so much as you think. It all depends on the way you look at the matter."

"But to admit the Irish members, after they have an Irish Parliament, to vote at Westminster would destroy the Bill." "So it would," said Mr. Chamberlain laughing, "and so much the better. The Bill is a wretched one, and the accompanying Land Bill a great deal worse. What do the Ulster tenant farmers think of that measure?"

"They do not like it as associated with the Home Rule Bill. They think, too, that twenty years' pur-

chase on the basis of the judicial rents would be much too high. So far as I can judge, they consider that fifteen years' purchase would be quite sufficient."

"And what about resistance?"

"My opinion decidedly is that the Ulster Unionists would never submit to such a Parliament and Government as the Home Rule Bill proposes to thrust upon them. This would lead to a civil war."

Mr. Chamberlain thoroughly agreed with this opinion. During many subsequent conversations, year by year, with the member for West Birmingham on this question, he has always held the same language. "Let the Ulster Unionists," he said, "show their British fellow-citizens that they are in earnest."

In the great debate on O'Connell's amendment for a committee to consider the Repeal of the Union at the beginning of 1833, Macaulay observed: "The House of Commons of the United Kingdom, it has been said, is chiefly elected by Protestants, and therefore cannot be trusted to legislate for Catholic Ireland. If this be so, how can an Irish House of Commons, chiefly elected by Catholics, be trusted to legislate for Protestant Ulster?" The brilliant essayist and historian turned to O'Connell and said: "I defy the honourable and learned member, therefore, to find a reason for having a Parliament at Dublin which will not be just as good a reason for having another Parliament at Londonderry."

Mr. Gladstone probably heard those words delivered in the debate on the address in answer to the Queen's Speech a few days after the first Reformed Parliament

met. From his language, however, when it was quoted during a debate on this first Home Rule Bill, he appeared almost to have forgotten it, and to question its accuracy. Mr. Chamberlain, however, to me personally, and to correspondents immediately afterwards, had expressed with his usual clearness the same opinion. To one of them he wrote: "The instructive instances which you give from American experiences are precisely in point, and the Protestant population of Ulster would, in my opinion, be fully entitled either to claim a separate autonomy or to maintain their connection with Great Britain. I am convinced, after careful inquiry, that the Loyalists of the North of Ireland will not quietly submit themselves to the control of a Dublin Parliament, which they believe, with much reason, would be hostile to their religious and material interests."

This letter, written in reply to a gentleman who had called his attention to the case of the secession of West Virginia, must have been written a few days after the interview to which I have referred. It was published in Ulster on May the 15th, just before the expected division on the motion for the second reading of the Home Rule Bill. It needs scarcely be said that it did not diminish the excitement which had been daily growing since the measure had been introduced. The word "Resist! Resist!" was on the lips not merely of Orangemen, but of Liberals, of those who by their profession were men of peace, merchants, manufacturers, bankers, medical men, and even clergymen.

Before the division on the second reading I had

returned to Belfast. It was necessary at such a time that I should be present at what almost threatened to become a seat of war. That preparations for resistance were being made in some of the Ulster counties, most certainly in one, though I did not know it at the time, I have since been very circumstantially informed by persons whose good faith I have never had any reason for doubting, and who themselves took no part in the proceedings. Those preparations were not made by the humbler classes of Ulster Protestants, by the poorer Orangemen, who might be thought to run little risk except that of losing their lives. They were made by country gentlemen, by magistrates, by deputy-lieutenants, and by members of the aristocracy. Mr. Haslett, afterwards Sir James, and then member for the West Division of Belfast, said to a correspondent of the *Birmingham Gazette*, "There can be no doubt that the Loyalists are arming." The statement that Lord Wolseley had said that he would in the event of resistance put himself at the head of the Ulster Unionists produced a great effect. Lord Wolseley's ancestor, though a Yorkshireman, had taken a distinguished part in the civil war in Ireland. He had been sent by Kirke to command the Enniskilleners, had defeated Mountcashel at Newtownbutler, when the shout of "Advance!" was raised, and had afterwards again distinguished himself at the Boyne. These historical facts were well known to a large part of the Ulster population. They were at this time recalled with great significance. The present Lord Wolseley was believed, if the

circumstances required it, to be ready to act a part worthy of the representative of his family at the time of the great Revolution.

Advertisements for the supply of twenty thousand Snider rifles and for the services of competent drill instructors appeared in the Ulster papers. These, however, were not then regarded as serious. When Mr. Morley's attention to them was called by that anxious guardian of law and order, Mr. W. O'Brien, the Irish Chief Secretary said truly enough that people who wished to arm the Ulster Protestants would scarcely advertise for twenty thousand Snider rifles. In Belfast, though there as elsewhere in Ulster resistance was undoubtedly contemplated, there were no manufacturers of arms. It was not only among the Orangemen of the country, but also among those who had always been Liberals, that according to subsequent information there was at the time the greatest danger.

The Irish Nationalist members, while the debate on the Home Rule Bill dragged its slow length along, were only too ready to maintain that Ulster was in a state little short of rebellion. On the second reading of the Arms Act Continuance Bill, Mr. Morley allowed it to be understood that it was especially directed against armed assemblies of Orangemen. Mr. Parnell declared that there had been tumultuous and riotous gatherings of Orangemen wishing to murder the Irish Catholics. Irish Nationalist members represented Ulster as already beginning a civil war, or something at least very

like civil war. Had the Home Rule Bill gone through the various stages and become law, what the consequences would have been, according to the utterances of the Irish Nationalists themselves, it was not difficult to foretell.

Already, too, the shares in the Belfast banks, as stable financial institutions as any in the United Kingdom, and other Ulster stocks had fallen most seriously. It was estimated that in this way a loss of two millions had already been incurred. As soon, however, as it became certain that Mr. Gladstone and his Government would not be able to carry the second reading of their Bill, the Ulster securities again began to rise. Then Mr. Gladstone made the announcement that on the Bill passing the second reading it would not be carried further during the usual session. After a debate which had been intentionally prolonged for three weeks, this was virtually a confession of defeat. It was admitted that under any circumstances the measure would have to be reconstructed, and that with the continuance of the Irish members in the House of Commons it became really, as Mr. Chamberlain had said, a new Bill.

The division was taken in the early morning of June the 8th. Though much pressure had been placed on members to support it, it was thrown out by thirty : three hundred and eleven voting for it, three hundred and forty-one against it. In Belfast the first people to be aware of the defeat of the Bill, independently of the newspaper officials, were the police on

duty in the streets. Several of them were seen embracing one another for joy at having escaped being left, after two years, to an Irish Government.

Unfortunately during the previous week there had been serious disturbances in Belfast requiring the intervention of the police. Every day, as the long debate on the so-called Government of Ireland Bill proceeded, the excitement of the populace increased. The first riots in 1864 had begun between the shipwrights and the navvies in the employment of Messrs. Harland and Wolff on the Queen's Island. At this time again, two navvies, a Protestant and a Catholic, engaged in digging a dock, had a quarrel. The Catholic was reported to have said, "When we get Home Rule you will not have bread to eat." It was stated, truly or falsely, that the Protestant had been beaten. The next day a large body of shipwrights, iron and not wooden shipwrights, as for the most part they had now become, marched down on the Catholic navvies, put them to flight, and even drove some of them into the water. One young man was drowned. A serious collision began, and more or less continued until the Home Rule Bill had been defeated. The following day, in the large and populous district north of the town called the Shankhill Road, there were great rejoicings over the rejection of the measure. Bonfires were lighted and a torchlight procession was organised. It was thought by some impartial observers that had the police allowed the bonfires to burn out in what was exclusively a Protestant quarter, the excitement

might have quieted down. But they set to work to vigorously stamp them out, and therefore became the object of a series of the most determined attacks on the part of the enraged mobs.

These riots continued with little interruption for several weeks, and were more than once renewed. They had this remarkable feature at first, as distinguished from their predecessors: they were not so much attacks of a Protestant populace on the Catholic, or of a Catholic on the Protestant, as collisions of the Protestants with the police, who had become to them most obnoxious. The Catholics, evidently under the advice of their leaders, withdrew from the turbulent scenes and kept themselves quiet. But between the police and the lower classes of the Protestants on the Shankhill Road, in York Street, and on Bower's Hill, all more or less Protestant, there was very serious warfare. The police to protect themselves used their rifles with deadly effect, and, as is usual in such circumstances, innocent people were shot down. Certain Catholic taverns in Protestant districts were gutted, and the liquor was distributed among the rioters or poured into the streets.

Nothing did more to promote these disturbances than the language of the Nationalist press. The correspondents of these journals professed to be in Mr. Morley's confidence, and wrote that he was sending from the South and West of Ireland large bodies of country police, presumably Catholic, to shoot down the loyal Protestants of Belfast. It was said, too, that these Protestants, all of course presumed to

be Orangemen, had no courage, and that, according to Mr. Morley, a few Irish policemen, if vigorously handled, could easily put them down. Mr. Morley never used the language placed in his mouth. But it was copied into the Conservative and Orange press in Belfast, and added fuel to the flames. Even while the police within were using their rifles at the windows, a number of the rioters attacked the barrack on the Shankhill Road, and attempted to force the doors, shouting, "Morley says we can't fight!" Many lives were lost during these appalling disturbances, which began on the 1st June, broke out again in the middle of July, and were afterwards renewed at the beginning of August. In what is called Springfield, along the Falls Road, where the Protestants did come into collision with the Catholics, they fought all through one Saturday night and into the Sunday, without apparently any hindrance on the part of the police, who were tired and had to patrol the streets in the town. Only one reporter, and he a gentleman from London but with local knowledge, communicated to a single newspaper the day afterwards the facts of this long Saturday night and Sunday morning's struggle between the rival mobs. These rioters seemed delighted to be left to themselves, and to have the opportunity of fighting it out. That many lives were lost was generally believed, but if so, the bodies were privately buried without any notice having been given to the public authorities.

On the Monday evening, August 2nd, on returning from Portrush, I found Sir Edward Harland, the

mayor, waiting for me. His appearance at once showed his anxiety. "I have come to you," he said, "on a very urgent matter. There has been another meeting of magistrates, the riots are still going on; they may at any time become worse. The police is really our only arm. If they be beaten, then the whole town goes. Do all you can in your newspaper to support the police." That evening I had to dine at the house of one of Sir Edward Harland's partners with a Home Rule member of Parliament, who had been recommended to me by another Home Rule acquaintance from the Devonshire Club, a reverend gentleman, an intimate friend of Mr. Gladstone, and himself also a Home Ruler. At the dinner the conversation was on the Home Rule Bill, for which this member of Parliament had just voted. Our host, Mr. William Pirrie, the present Lord Mayor, was a Liberal, but, like nearly every Liberal in Belfast, and the whole North of Ireland, a Liberal Unionist. I asked him in the presence of our Home Rule guest whether it were true, as Sir Edward Harland was reported to have said, that if the Home Rule Bill ever became law, his firm would withdraw their great shipbuilding works from Belfast, and take them to the Clyde. "Most certainly," he said, "this would be done." There were several other eminent Belfast merchants and manufacturers present. They were also all Liberals, and thus by singular coincidence met at haphazard over a dinner-table, and with no political object whatever. I questioned one after the other, in the presence of the metropolitan member

of Parliament who had been recommended to me, and they one and all gave the same answer. They all said that under an Irish Parliament and Government there would be no security for life nor property, no fair play to the Loyalists in the North of Ireland, and that utter want of commercial confidence without which Belfast could not continue to prosper. They all agreed with their host that the great manufacturing and industrial enterprises of their town would have to seek a new home on the other side of the Irish Sea. These declarations came on our Home Rule member of Parliament as startling revelations; but they did not afterwards induce him to alter his opinions or at least his course of conduct.

As the riots were in progress, Mr. Morley indeed plainly told his constituents at Newcastle that the object of the Home Rule Bill was to hand over the government of Ireland to the Nationalists. In Ulster these very candid words caused much dismay. It was a public recognition of what all who studied the measure from a Unionist point of view had asserted to be a fact. The Irish Chief Secretary, too, still continued candidly to state that to allow the Irish members with an Irish Parliament also to sit in what would be the British House of Commons was utterly impracticable.

The Irish Presbyterian General Assembly had just met in Belfast. Before the sitting closed, it renewed its deliberate and solemn declarations against Mr. Gladstone's Irish Home Rule policy and his Home Rule Bill. That Assembly was the largest ever

known. It consisted of 760 members, 465 ministers, and 295 elders. The condemnatory resolutions were carried with only one dissentient. But in his electioneering speeches at this time, Mr. Gladstone referred contemptuously to such a declaration of opinion, as indeed also to the emphatic manifesto of the Ulster Liberal Unionists. "He had been told," he said, "that in the South of Ireland there were Presbyterian ministers in favour of a Home Rule Bill." There may have been two, but certainly not more. They were under Southern influences, and might, as Mr. Gladstone was reminded, not unreasonably, as Unionists, have feared to be subjected to that system of boycotting which in the North of Ireland was so powerless. Lord Hartington, who had so recently visited Belfast and entered into friendly personal relations with Ulster Liberals, so many of whom were Presbyterians, vigorously took up their defence. His statements were unanswerable. Mr. Gladstone, however, persisted in seeing only one side to this question, and that the one to which he had always been opposed until the end of the elections in the month of the last December. He now appealed to the constituencies again as the month of June closed. The result was not equivocal. In return for the support of the Irish Nationalist members, he found himself deprived of more than their number of eminent and high-minded Liberals, with the ablest and most respected of his old colleagues at their head.

It was fortunate for the United Kingdom that it had at least gained a respite. It was most fortunate

for Ireland. People were given time to breathe, to collect themselves, to think. The riots in Belfast had threatened to extend over all Ulster where the Protestants and Catholics, the Unionists and Nationalists were in close proximity. Before the disturbances in the great Unionist town were over, police had to be sent from it to other places in the provinces where rioting had begun. There had been two serious disturbances, and they seemed not unlikely to become worse. The people were gathering together according to their sectarian and political distinctions. They were drilling; they were arming. The Catholic Nationalists were becoming exultant and defiant.

The formation of the new Government with a decided Unionist majority gave confidence to the people of Ulster, who had seemed to be abandoned to those whom they could not but regard as their enemies. Had the Home Rule Bill not been defeated, and in consequence of that defeat a new Parliament chosen and a new Government constituted, the civil war which has been so often threatened, and which I had predicted to Mr. Gladstone himself, would that summer have begun. Everything in Ulster was pointing to a struggle between the rival and hostile populations, analogous to that which was signalled by Tyrconnel when he raised the flag on Dublin Castle, with the ominous words, "Now or never, now and for ever!"

CHAPTER VIII

1886–1887

Mr. Gladstone's Electoral Miscalculations—Ulster Liberal Unionist Discontent—Mr. T. W. Russell—Formation of the New Unionist Government—Mr. Parnell's Land Bill—The Ashbourne Act—The Plan of Campaign—Boycotting—A Liberal Unionist Conference and Banquet in London—Private Conference with Lord Hartington—Lord Randolph Churchill's Resignation and its Consequences—Mr. Balfour as Irish Chief Secretary.

WE had, however, come to an utter change of scene. The elections in July were watched with greater interest than they had ever previously been. This was the first time that the country had been appealed to on the Home Rule question. It was appealed to in favour of Home Rule by Mr. Gladstone, who had little more than six months before asked the country to give him a majority against Home Rule. Day by day the electoral returns showed that the Unionists were gaining ground in the constituencies. It was known that Mr. Gladstone would require to win fifty seats in order to have a working majority. But he found the Irish Nationalist vote, on which he had so confidently depended, and for which he had made such

sacrifices, more than counterbalanced. The Conservatives greatly improved their position, and as the result of the appeal to the constituencies could, with the support of the Liberal Unionists, count on a majority of a hundred votes. In every way Mr. Gladstone had miscalculated.

In Ulster the Liberal Unionists in several elections co-operated with the Conservatives. But their union was far from complete. They resented the manner in which they had lost their representatives at the former general election in November by the combination between the Nationalists and the Conservatives, and they not unreasonably thought that, as they were now more or less allied with the Conservatives against the Nationalists, they had a claim to certain seats as vacancies occurred. What was done, however, was done somewhat grudgingly. The discontent had doubtless an effect on certain elections. Mr. Haslett, a very strong Conservative and Orangeman, was defeated in the West Division of Belfast by Mr. Sexton: there were undoubtedly some discontented Liberal Unionist abstentions. The manner in which Mr. Mulholland had defeated Mr. Walker, Mr. Gladstone's late Irish Attorney General, when the learned gentleman a short time before was, like Mr. Gladstone himself, a pronounced Unionist and opponent of Home Rule, had also now an effect on the election for the city of Londonderry, in which there was a considerable body of Liberal Unionists, and where the two antagonistic parties

were almost equally balanced. Mr., afterwards Sir Charles E. Lewis, nominally retained the seat by three votes. His opponent was Mr. Justin M'Carthy, who was at that time, next to Mr. Parnell himself, represented as the leader of the Nationalist party. It was said, whether truly or falsely, that so anxious at this time was Mr. Gladstone for Mr. M'Carthy's return, he wrote not fewer than thirty autograph letters to Liberals in the Maiden City to induce them to vote for the Nationalist candidate. Owing to some informality which was of a serious nature, Mr. Lewis was some time afterwards unseated on petition, and Mr. M'Carthy substituted.

In South Derry Mr. Thomas Lea, a Liberal Unionist, was returned by the steady union of Liberals and Conservatives. At the former election Mr. Lea had been defeated for East Donegal. By a similar union Lord E. Hamilton, a Conservative, was elected for North Tyrone, and Mr. T. W. Russell, a Liberal Unionist, for South Tyrone.

Mr. Russell's election was of greater importance to the Unionist cause than was at the time imagined. He was born at Cupar in Fife, but had come to the North of Ireland almost as a boy, and had been a long time in a large commercial house in Donaghmore, near Dungannon, with the proprietor of which, Mr. Brown, he has ever since continued on the most friendly and even affectionate terms. Both being considered Presbyterians, Mr. Russell early at a Sabbath school had Mr. Thomas A. Dickson as his teacher. Mr. Dickson had also represented Dungannon, and after-

wards Tyrone; but it had pleased him to follow Mr. Gladstone in his sudden conversion to Irish Home Rule, and his electioneering experiences had been somewhat unfortunate. Mr. Russell became an earnest advocate of the temperance cause, the secretary of the Irish Sunday Closing Association, and also of a Young Men's Christian Association in Dungannon. He thus at meeting after meeting acquired the habit of speaking before popular audiences with great fluency and effect. His oratorical gifts were now to be used most successfully in the cause of the Union. He is perhaps the best platform speaker in the United Kingdom. One of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule colleagues said to me, "Of all the Unionist speakers the one I should most dread if he were to oppose me in my constituency would be Mr. Russell." From the source it came, this was a great compliment. Ardent, intrepid, thoroughly in earnest, and very different from most of the Irish Nationalist speakers whose assertions he had afterwards so frequently to expose, Mr. Russell was and is always most careful in getting up his facts.

Two Liberal Unionist members like Mr. Lea and Mr. Russell at least gave a certain amount of representation to their party. The Ulster Liberal Unionists have, however, always said that they could not acquiesce in the compact which had been entered into by the Unionist leaders in London for the existing proportion of Liberal Unionist and Conservative Unionist members to be preserved, and a Liberal Unionist thus to be only selected for a

Liberal Unionist vacancy, and a Conservative Unionist always for a Conservative Unionist vacancy. They said, and have ever since continued to say, that by such a compact they would have no representation in Ulster at all, because all their seats were lost at the general election in the November of 1885 by the alliance between the Conservatives and the Nationalists, and that on any equitable principle they ought to have restored to them by the Conservatives those former seats.

The return of Mr. Lea for South Derry and Mr. T. W. Russell for South Tyrone gave some satisfaction to the Liberal Unionists. Mr. Lea had defeated Mr. Timothy Healy, and Mr. Russell Mr. O'Brien. For those two active followers Mr. Parnell had to find seats much further south.

The last poll declared in Ireland at the general election was that of South Tyrone. The defeat of Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues had for the time been practically overwhelming. The numbers as then summed up were three hundred and sixteen Conservatives, and the Home Rule Liberals under Mr. Gladstone not quite two hundred. Lord Hartington had with him some seventy-eight Liberal Unionists, who virtually counterbalanced the Irish Nationalist members.

During the formation of the new Government some anxiety in Ulster was shown respecting the course Mr. Chamberlain and the Duke of Devonshire might take. Their Ulster Liberal supporters were not in favour of seeing them in office. The overtures then and subsequently made to Lord Hartington, though

highly honourable to himself, were not generally favoured by the rank and file of either party. It soon became known that the Government would be purely Conservative, and that it would for the most part be what Lord Salisbury's was when it was defeated during the previous January by the followers of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Parnell, who were for the first time allied.

Sir M. Hicks-Beach was to return to the Irish Chief Secretaryship, which he had formerly occupied. The appointment of Lord Londonderry to the Irish Viceroyalty excited much interest. He was an Ulster landlord, and regarded indeed as an Ulster nobleman. It was not long since he had succeeded his father in the peerage, and he had not yet taken a very active political part.

The appointment of Lord Randolph Churchill as Chancellor of Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons was popular with the Ulster Conservatives and Orangemen. His recent visit to Belfast had produced more effect than the former one of Sir Stafford Northcote, who had been declared to be deficient in "go." Lord Randolph Churchill had, it was said, plenty of "go." He was regarded as the very man to excite the enthusiasm of the Orange lodges, even while looked on askance by the Ulster Liberals.

The new Parliament met on the 19th of August, for the passing of the estimates which had been kept over by the late Government. Lord Randolph Churchill in his new position found himself attacked

for the speeches he had delivered in Belfast in the past February. The Belfast riots, of which there was still some occasional effervescence, were by the Nationalists attributed to his encouragement of resistance, and especially to the frequently quoted refrain, "Ulster will fight, and Ulster will be right." It is but fair to say that Lord Randolph's speeches had nothing whatever to do with those riots. They began with the popular excitement caused by the Home Rule Bill, with the antagonism thus roused in the poorer and more turbulent Protestants and Catholics in immediate proximity to one another, and with what certainly appeared to be a want of management on the part of some of those who had the direction of the police. With regard to an intention to resist a Home Rule Act there never was any secret. It was no suggestion on the part of Lord Randolph Churchill. In the debate on the Address in reply to the Queen's Speech, Colonel Saunderson and other Ulster Conservative members stated plainly that a Home Rule Bill such as Mr. Gladstone had introduced would, if it became law, be resisted. They only emphasized what was said both by the Conservatives and Liberal Unionists in Ulster. The Government had altered the Commission appointed by the late Ministry to inquire into the Belfast riots, placing at its head the highly respected Catholic judge, Mr. Justice Day.

While the Nationalists expressed such indignation at the Belfast riots, which certainly did not originate in any deliberate and general defiance of the law, they had nothing to say against the increasing violence of

their own newspapers. These had been more or less moderate while the late Government was in office; but they resumed their old virulence and vehemence. As had been usual in these years, *United Ireland* took the lead in the appeals to what could only be regarded as lawlessness. The land question was again the convenient resource. As in the days when Mr. Forster, who had recently died, had under Mr. Gladstone to do what he could to support law and order, some of the principal members of the National League began again to encourage a strike against rents. Mr. Morley stated that while the Land League branches before the new Government came into office numbered only twenty, they had since increased to more than a hundred. This was on the second night of the debate on the motion for the second reading of the Land Bill of which Mr. Parnell virtually gave notice when he moved an amendment to the Address, and which was defeated by a majority of ninety-five, on the 21st of September, a few days before the prorogation. The leading features of the measure were, as he himself stated, to give power to leaseholders to apply to the Land Courts to have judicial rents fixed like ordinary tenants under the Act of 1881, to provide for the revision of the judicial rents themselves on the basis of prices, and for the suspension of proceedings for ejectment on the payment of half the rent and half the arrears.

The Government and the Liberal Unionists did not disguise that there had been a fall in prices, and that in some instances the earlier judicial rents under the

new circumstances might be too high. But it was startling to find Mr. Gladstone, after returning from a voyage to Denmark, supporting the Bill, especially on the ground that the judicial rents were too high. It was on the very scale of these judicial rents that he had proposed to buy the Irish landlords out, scarcely six months previously, in the Land Bill which he stated to be supplementary to the Home Rule Bill, and an indispensable part of that measure. He had then proposed to expropriate the landlords by an enormous advance of State money, that is, as has been stated, by the increase virtually of the National Debt. Had that measure become law, two or three months after it had passed it would have been said that the tenants could not pay the instalments fixed on the basis of the judicial rents. The case of Mr. Parnell was that there had been a great fall in prices, and that rents, whether original or judicial, could not be paid. The leaseholders too might be entitled to relief; but Mr. Gladstone, against the remonstrance of many Ulster Liberals five years before, had, as we have seen, refused to include them in the measure. "I will not," he said, "break contracts." He was now ready to break contracts, and to contradict his own very recent land proposals.

In forming any just estimate of Mr. Parnell's Land Bill, it must always be remembered that he looked on the Irish land question as merely a means to enable him to carry a Home Rule Bill. The words he had used when he cast in his lot with the Land League were not forgotten by the Ulster tenant farmers, and

had much to do in keeping them in the ways of legality and honesty. Now, when the Home Rule Bill had been defeated, he and his followers turned away for the time from the political movement to the agrarian one, of which during the recent session, and while the Home Rule Bill was before the House of Commons, they had said nothing. As has been already stated, they had looked very coldly indeed on Mr. Gladstone's Bill for buying out the Irish landlords.

The Land Purchase Act, which the Conservative Government passed very soon after they entered office in the summer of 1885, was working very well. It proposed to advance five millions to the tenants to buy their farms. The name of Lord Ashbourne, the Lord Chancellor, was associated, and still is, with the measure, though it was, as he had himself candidly said, founded on a proposal of Mr. Trevelyan when Irish Chief Secretary. It was thought that if Mr. Parnell's Bill became law it would render the Ashbourne Act a dead letter. The Parnellites indeed, and Mr. Gladstone himself soon afterwards, began to look very jealously on land purchase by the tenants with the money of the State. It was already seen that the purchasing tenants were shutting their ears to the seductions of the Land League, which Mr. Parnell's Land Bill, with its certain rejection, was intended again to call forth into vigorous action, with other machinery, and especially of the Plan of Campaign, that not long afterwards was published to the world by one of its authors, Mr. W. O'Brien, in the columns of *United Ireland*.

The tactics of the autumn of 1880 were again adopted. As has been pointed out, Mr. Gladstone's Government at that time did not renew the Peace Preservation Act, which expired just after they met as ministers the new Parliament. In a similar spirit, the new Conservative and Unionist ministry sought in the autumn and winter of 1886 to govern by the ordinary law. But as in the summer and winter of 1880, so now in the autumn and winter of 1886 the Irish Nationalists endeavoured to make coercion a necessity. At both times it was openly said by prominent Nationalists: "We shall force the Ministry to govern by coercion, or not at all."

They did their best, and they succeeded in encouraging another strike against rents, and especially by the new machinery of the Plan of Campaign. At the time the Plan was put forward Mr. Parnell had indeed disappeared. For some two months he was nowhere to be found; his residence was a mystery. He again emerged into light at the Euston Square Hotel, when he stated that he had been ill, and for some time knew nothing of what was going on in Ireland. He did not profess to approve of the Plan of Campaign, but his avowed disapproval did not interfere, and could scarcely have been intended to interfere, with the war against the landlords being carried on, particularly by Messrs. W. O'Brien and John Dillon, who at this time held agrarian meetings in Ulster. Land purchase on the principle of the Ashbourne Act, or of Mr. Gladstone's late Bill, was openly sneered at, and the tenants were exhorted to

combine amongst themselves and decide what rents they ought to pay, while using threats which were literally carried out of paying none at all.

The Government appointed a Commission, which they had promised before Parliament was prorogued, to inquire into the alleged agricultural distress and into the working of the Land Acts. The Chairman was Earl Cowper, who had been Mr. Gladstone's Irish Viceroy when he formed his Government in 1880, and who had afterwards been superseded by Lord Spencer. Earl Cowper was now a Liberal Unionist, and as Chairman of the Commission had the confidence of the Ulster tenant farmers. But the Nationalists called out for Mr. Parnell's Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill.

Boycotting was openly recommended. Protestant grocers and whisky merchants, and other large traders who in Belfast do a large wholesale business with the remote country districts, as in Donegal and in other parts of Ulster, generally found their Nationalist customers falling off. It was proposed to boycott the White Star liners because they were built in Belfast, and because their builders, Messrs. Harland and Wolff, were alleged to have shown Orange sympathies during the late riots. It was proposed by certain Nationalist newspapers, especially by those owned by the late Mr. E. Dwyer Gray, to boycott the Protestant and Unionist journals as advertising mediums. But Mr. Gray was very significantly told that more than one could play at that game, that Catholic and Nationalist newspapers in the North of

Ireland might not be indifferent to Protestant and Unionist advertisements. The threat had the effect intended. Nothing more was heard in Ulster of this recommendation. Complaints by certain Protestant Home Rulers were made of boycotting in Belfast and other Ulster towns by Unionists. One Presbyterian minister who became a Home Ruler, and has since been made a magistrate, did find the members of his congregation diminish. He had lost, he said, fifty pounds by his devotion to Home Rule. His complaints were poured into Mr. Gladstone's ears; but members of congregations in England occasionally object to the conduct of their clergymen. A High Churchman like Mr. Gladstone himself would select a High Church curate in preference to a Low Church one. To many opponents of Home Rule in the North of Ireland the question was religious as well as political. Though the complaint of boycotting on the part of Protestants and Unionists was so often raised, no trustworthy evidence of it has ever been published. But by the Nationalists boycotting was publicly advocated on principle, and was and is systematically and remorselessly carried out.

The Government in the last days of November decided on taking action against Mr. John Dillon. Proceedings too were stated to be contemplated against Mr. W. O'Brien and the organ of the Plan of Campaigners, *United Ireland*. These were, it was said in Ulster, "the first steps taken to enforce the law." A few days afterwards an important Liberal Unionist Conference was to be held in London, under

Lord Hartington's presidentship. A deputation was appointed of Ulster Liberal Unionists to attend, and, as the assembly was one of the first of the kind since the Plan of Campaign had been comprehensively carried out, the proceedings were regarded with much interest.

It was a conference in Willis's Rooms in the afternoon of the 7th of December, and also a dinner in the evening at the Hôtel Métropole. Both assemblies were remarkable for the social and political positions of many of the delegates present. There were no fewer than forty from Ulster, eminently representative of the Ulster Liberals. The letter read from Mr. Bright at the conference was most emphatic in his condemnation of any project to set up an Irish Parliament, and of the alliance which now seemed to be formed between the Nationalists and Mr. Gladstone, of whom, he wrote, he did not wish to say what he thought, and therefore did not attend the conference.

Lord Derby at the dinner coupled Sir George Trevelyan with Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain as a staunch Unionist. Mr. Trevelyan had succeeded his father in the baronetcy. He had also, as he had himself anticipated, been defeated at the recent general election for the Hawick Burghs, and his Liberal Unionist supporters had subscribed for his portrait, which he soon afterwards received, but from the inscription on which he, as a Home Ruler, has, it is said, perhaps not truly, struck out the word "Unionist," leaving only that of "Liberal." This

portrait he declared he would always regard as a cherished heirloom. At the Liberal Unionist banquet, Lord Derby ridiculed the suggestion of the Gladstonians that the Liberal Unionists would soon disappear as an independent body and be merged in one or other of the two great political parties. "Men," said the earl, "like their noble chairman, Mr. Chamberlain, and Sir George Trevelyan, had not joined the Conservative ranks; they were not men to swallow their principles for the sake of the most worthless of all prizes—the possession of office, without power to carry out their own will." Sir George Trevelyan, in his speech, echoed Lord Derby's lofty words. He said that "the governing motive of the electors was a moral repugnance to hand over the law in Ireland to the lawless, and order to the disorderly." The Ulster Liberal delegates heard this declaration with much satisfaction as coming from the lips of one of Mr. Gladstone's late Irish Chief Secretaries. In contemplation of a probable vacancy in an important Ulster constituency, some of them suggested that Sir George Trevelyan would be a very desirable representative.

The next day, before leaving London, those Ulster delegates had a separate conference with Lord Hartington. They represented that it would be desirable the Ulster tenant farmers should see that the Unionist policy was not merely negative. Agricultural prices, it was said, had continued to fall; dissatisfaction was expressed with the administration of the Land Act of 1881, and the desirability of its reform suggested,

and particularly in the interests of the leaseholders and the occupiers of town parks. To these proposals Lord Hartington paid great attention. He advised the deputation to see Sir Michael Hicks-Beach on the subject. The hint was taken. As soon as the members of the deputation returned to Ulster, they requested the Irish Chief Secretary to appoint a day for an interview. This soon afterwards took place. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach said, reasonably enough, that as the Government had appointed a Commission to consider the Irish land question, they could scarcely legislate upon it before they received the report. But before Christmas Day the announcement of Lord Randolph Churchill's resignation of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer and the leadership of the House of Commons produced a ministerial crisis. Lord Hartington, after the recent conference, had left London for the Continent. He was by Lord Salisbury called home, and offered the first place in the new ministry. It is well known that the marquis again, as in the preceding summer, rejected the offer, and for the same reason. With only some seventy-eight followers he could not satisfactorily take the first place in a Government which would be absolutely dependent on the Conservative party. The Ulster Liberals fully approved of their leader's decision. They were not in favour of the fusion recommended in some Unionist newspapers, neither were the rank and file of the Conservatives themselves.

Lord Randolph Churchill's resignation was, however, regarded as a great loss. It was supposed in

Ulster, and especially by the Orangemen, that there was no person so well qualified to occupy his place. He was said to be a game cock, though a bantam. It was not believed that the cause of his resignation was merely on a difference of opinion respecting the amount of the naval estimates and the desire to produce an economical and popular Budget. The dissension was thought to be more or less personal, originating in the family relations of the two ducal houses of Churchill and Hamilton, one of them being so well known and respected in Ulster, and Lord George Hamilton being the First Lord of the Admiralty, to whose naval estimates Lord Randolph objected. But it was not foreseen as the year 1887 began, and the time for the meeting of Parliament approached, that Lord Randolph Churchill's resignation would be followed by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach's. This, however, was soon found to be the case. Mr. Balfour then became Irish Chief Secretary, and a new and very remarkable era in the government of Ireland began. It had important consequences to Ulster, to all Ireland, and indeed to the United Kingdom and the whole Empire.

CHAPTER IX

1887–1888

A Stormy Session—The New Irish Chief Secretary's Position—Sir George Trevelyan and the Vacancy in North Antrim—The Beginning of Mr. Balfour's Struggle against Disorder and Lawlessness in Ireland—The Irish Land Act of 1887—Interviews with Lord Spencer—"A miserable minority"—The Lord Spencer at the Time of the Act of Union—Mr. Morley—Lord Hartington—Mr. Chamberlain—Interview with Mr. Gladstone—The Irish Land Bill of 1887—An English Home Rule Deputation—The Struggle against the Forces of Lawlessness.

WHEN Parliament met on the 27th of January, Mr. Balfour was still Minister for Scotland. It was not until the following March that he accepted the office of Irish Chief Secretary. On the 14th of that month he appeared in his place to answer questions on Irish affairs, especially on the working of the Ashbourne Land Purchase Act, on the land loan, and on Irish prison clerks. The debate on the address had been protracted for more than three weeks, and afterwards the new procedure rules gave rise to very animated discussions. The Opposition, Liberal and Nationalist, had made common cause. It was evident that against both the proposed alterations in pro-

cedure and the Irish Criminal Law Amendment Bill, itself professing to deal with legal procedure, the forms of the House would be strained to the utmost. A very stormy and a very protracted session was in progress, and in it the ability of the new Irish Chief Secretary was evidently to be taxed to the utmost.

At this time no person would have thought of comparing Mr. Balfour with Lord Randolph Churchill. It was not believed that he would be at all likely before the new Parliament ended to become himself a successor to Lord Randolph in the leadership of the Conservative party in the House of Commons. He had indeed been considered one of the Fourth party which Lord Randolph had formerly led in the House of Commons. He had been regarded as a follower of the noble lord, but not himself a chief. Though several members of this Fourth party, including its leader, had, as has been said, attacked Lord Spencer after he had left office for having resolutely administered the late Coercion Act, Mr. Balfour, it may be repeated, was not in that number. He evidently shrank from that invidious task. Until appointed Irish Chief Secretary his name was scarcely known in the country he was so resolutely to govern for four years. His appointment was even attributed to the Prime Minister's nepotism. "Oh, he is Lord Salisbury's eccentric nephew," was the somewhat contemptuous remark. Mr. Balfour was at this time not regarded as a new element of strength in the Irish Government. The ministry, it was said, required tonics and not blood letting. The new Chief Secretary's

manner was hesitating, and thought, though not justly, to be somewhat supercilious. Mr. Morley, as editor of the *Fortnightly Review*, had, in contributions from Mr. Balfour's pen, recognised his qualifications both as a thinker and a dialectician, qualifications, indeed, which had been manifested five years before in his Defence of Philosophic Doubt. But those who judged Mr. Balfour superficially spoke of him as a Dundreary style of man, and not at all as what he has proved himself to be. He now succeeded to what had been generally acknowledged to be the most difficult and thankless post in the Government. He succeeded to it at what was also generally acknowledged to be the most difficult time. It had injured several reputations of high promise. Mr. Balfour was considered, in Ulster at least, scarcely equal to the burdensome duties he had undertaken. He was thought to be far inferior to his predecessor, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. He was believed to be far inferior even to Sir George Trevelyan, who had, however, left the office thoroughly weary of it and disheartened, having declared in answer to his Nationalist assailants, under whose attacks he writhed, that though an Irish Chief Secretary he was still an English gentleman.

Since he appeared at the Liberal Unionist Conference, Sir George and Mr. Chamberlain had taken part in the Round Table Conference as representative Liberal Unionists, in order to see if some compromise could not be come to that the union of the Liberal party might be restored. Lord Hartington,

as he said, did not care to participate in the deliberations, preferring to stay at home. But Sir George Trevelyan still continued to be one of the most trusted of the Liberal Unionist leaders, ranking next to Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain. The expected vacancy in North Antrim occurred early in the new year, Mr. Macnaghten, the brother of Sir Francis and an eminent consulting chamber lawyer, being appointed a Lord Justice of Appeal. Three names were put forward as those of eligible candidates by the Unionists—Mr. Goschen, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer; Mr. Thomas Sinclair, the eminent Ulster Liberal Unionist and Presbyterian; and Sir Charles E. Lewis, who, having lost his seat for the city of Londonderry, had from his political friends received the consolation of a baronetcy. Mr. Goschen had, however, become the candidate for the Exchange Division of Liverpool, and could not, under the circumstances, accept the nomination for North Antrim. Mr. Thomas Sinclair's business arrangements, as was well known when his name as a matter of form was put forward, did not permit him to be a candidate. Sir C. E. Lewis issued his address without waiting for the request of the Liberal Unionists of the constituency, by whom he was accused of sharp practice. They asked, Why not wait until the contest for the Exchange Division of Liverpool was over, that in the event of Mr. Goschen's defeat there he might have a safe Ulster seat? And if he could not or would not come forward, why not accept Sir George Trevelyan, who had just received

such a handsome testimonial from his former Liberal Unionist constituents in the Hawick Burghs? Only a very short time afterwards Sir George's Ulster admirers learnt with profound astonishment that he had accepted Mr. Gladstone's Irish policy and was as a Home Ruler elected for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow. He did more. He actually announced that in Ireland the game of law and order was up. This was the most ignoble declaration perhaps ever made by any public man. As coming from his nephew, it might be thought sufficient to rouse Lord Macaulay from his vault in Westminster Abbey. To a statesman conscious of a high calling, the game of law and order can never be up. He is bound to struggle to the last against such an abject surrender of his duties. On the result of such a struggle all statesmanship and all government are staked.

Mr. Balfour had already begun that struggle in Ireland against what were thought to be great odds. He was, however, about to prove that the game of law and order, in spite of Sir George Trevelyan's announcement, was not up. He entered on this arduous duty under difficulties which none of his predecessors had had to encounter. Hitherto all the great parties in the State, whether in office or opposition, had been arrayed on the side of law and order. But when Mr. Balfour began his Irish administration Mr. Gladstone and the Home Rule Liberals were closely allied with Mr. Parnell and his party, and they acted together. This was seen in the long debates on the Address, particularly on Mr. Parnell's

amendment, on the efforts to affirm the new rules of procedure, and on the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, of which the later clauses in Committee were only carried by the use of the novel closure. Mr. Parnell stated that the new procedure rules were in themselves virtually a new Coercion Bill, and as such they were resisted by all the Opposition, Liberal and Irish Nationalist. It was not foreseen that the time would come when not merely a Bill for altering the proceedings under the criminal law, more or less of a technical character, would have to be passed through Committee by the closure, but that this closure would, by Mr. Gladstone's subsequent Government, become an ordinary ministerial resource, and be applied to prevent a full discussion of the most important clauses of his second Home Rule Bill itself.

Through all the obstacles placed in his path, Mr. Balfour set to work and struggled gallantly. While subjected to the most goading attacks in the House of Commons from the Irish Nationalists and in the columns of *United Ireland*, though called weekly in that newspaper in a plagiarism from O'Connell "The Base, the Brutal, and the Bloody," he never lost his temper. He was imperturbable, sometimes even contemptuously imperturbable. To Mr. Morley indeed, who loved to put teasing questions to him, he was always polite, frank, and even friendly.

The debates at this time lost much interest. In discussing the ministerial measures there was on the Opposition side of the House an obvious wish to occupy as much time as possible. During the six

years the Unionist Government continued in office, though good legislative work was done, it was more or less of a useful, social, and non-political character. In Mr. Balfour's first session as Irish Chief Secretary, though an Irish Leaseholders' Bill was brought in by the indefatigable Mr. T. W. Russell, and supported by the Government, it was systematically obstructed by Mr. Parnell and his followers, who professed to sympathise with the leaseholders. It was not until a late period of the session that the Government, following a report of their Royal Commission, were able to carry an improved Land Act, embodying most of the recommendations made to Lord Hartington by the Ulster Liberal delegates the day after the Conference in the past December. It admitted leaseholders to the benefits of the Land Act of 1881, gave some relief with respect to town parks, allowed for a term of three years a reduction of judicial rents on a scale of prices, put difficulties in the way of ejectments, and increased the jurisdiction of the judges in the county courts with respect to non-payment of rents and what was called bankruptcy. The measure was first introduced into the House of Lords. Had it not been so, it could scarcely have been passed at all. The long debates and the violent scenes in the House of Commons on the discussion of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill could scarcely be exceeded. The so-called Coercion Act, so far as giving powers of private inquiry, of summary jurisdiction, and of changing the venue, were in Mr. Gladstone's Peace Preservation Act, and most of them he and his colleagues had

intended renewing when they were defeated by the Irish Nationalists and Conservatives in the early summer of 1885. The question of Parnellism and Crime, raised in the *Times* with the best intentions, contributed to the excitement of the session, which, it was said, would have to be supplemented by another in the autumn.

At this time and during all the subsequent years, as circumstances admitted, I paid my usual visits in May or early in June to London. During those visits I had what might be called annual conversations with representative men on both sides in the two Houses, and especially with leading Liberal Unionists and Home Rule Liberals, whose acquaintance I had for the most part made when scarcely any of them could believe that Mr. Gladstone would suddenly go over to the Irish Nationalists, and that so many would themselves follow his example. As parties and public men had assumed the relative positions they virtually maintained during the whole of this Parliament from 1887 to 1892, it is not at all necessary for the full understanding of the Home Rule question that most of the events in detail and the personal communications of the various statesmen should be fully particularised by me every May or June as they took place.

Each time I saw Lord Spencer at his house, and talked with him of Irish affairs. Nothing could exceed his continued personal friendliness nor the patience with which he listened to representations which were not at all in harmony with the views he had recently

adopted. Again and again I had to repeat, and it was painful to repeat, the remark, "Lord Spencer, I am sorry that I do not come to say pleasant things." I had to tell him that so far from the opposition to the Home Rule policy of himself and of Mr. Gladstone showing indications of diminishing in Ulster, it was becoming more determined, that the waverers had nearly all become decided Liberal Unionists, and that scarcely any of those who were his political friends during his last Irish administration were now on his side. I told him that no person except one, Mr. Dillon, had ever said what an Irish Nationalist Parliament would be likely to do; but that this gentleman had been more precise than his associates. "What has Mr. Dillon said?" Lord Spencer asked. "Well, if he be correctly reported in the various speeches he has made, he has threatened the Irish police with what might befall them under an Irish Home Rule Parliament and Government. They would then, he has been represented as saying, be made to suffer for having carried out a policy of coercion. He has been equally candid with respect to what the Ulster Unionists may expect under similar circumstances. If I am not, too, very much mistaken, he has stated that, when Ireland has a Government and Parliament of her own, every one who has been prosecuted by what is called a British administration will have a pension for life." Lord Spencer winced.

I had also to tell the earl, for whom I had then, and still have, the most sincere respect, that the

Ulster Unionists had, in the event of its being carried, determined to resist a Home Rule Act.

"What form would that resistance take?"

"It might be passive at the first, but it would be sure to become active. It would probably begin by refusing to pay taxes."

Some time after I had stated this opinion to Lord Spencer, I observed that he alluded to it in a public speech. "We are told," he remarked, "that a Home Rule Act in Ulster will be resisted. But this is said to frighten us." Not at all. It was not believed that it would have much effect on the Liberal statesmen who had become Home Rulers, many of whom were more Parnellite than the Parnellites. The resolution continued to be deliberately expressed, and if possible more strongly by Mr. Gladstone's old Ulster Liberal supporters than by the Conservatives or even the Orangemen. An eminent Belfast physician, now a professor and author of some standard medical works, was asked by a Protestant clergyman if he would take charge of the ambulance corps in the struggle which, in certain contingencies, was undoubtedly contemplated. "No," he replied, "I shall shoulder a rifle."

But Lord Spencer himself used language which was not always conciliatory nor friendly to the Irish Unionists. I read in one of his speeches in the country that he was reported as having spoken of the opponents of Home Rule in Ireland as "a miserable minority." This language, as coming from Lord Spencer's lips, seemed incredible. In referring to it

in his presence he did not deny that he had used it; but he observed, "I am not in the habit of using offensive expressions about my political opponents." This was quite true. Yet I could not help but contrast the words "miserable minority" with the speech he had as Lord Lieutenant delivered during his last visit to Belfast at the Mayor's banquet. That representative assembly was not then thought to be part of "a miserable minority." A third of the people in numbers, and possessing such a superiority in wealth, industry, education, and loyalty, could never, I should have thought, be represented as a miserable minority by any British statesman. The Catholics of Belfast assert that they are a third of the population. This is not strictly accurate. They are nearly a fourth, and pay about a twelfth part of the rates. But they could not with any justice be called by their most bitter opponents a miserable minority of the people in Belfast.

Evidently wishing to compliment Lord Spencer, Mr. Gladstone had spoken of his grandfather, the Lord Spencer at the time of the Act of Union, as opposed to that measure. The statement I also read with amazement. I asked Lord Spencer if it were correct. He admitted that it was not, that it was the reverse of the truth. The Lord Spencer at the beginning of this century was one of the Whigs who, under Burke's encouragement and advice, had more than five years before the Union joined Mr. Pitt's Government. He had been appointed First Lord of the Admiralty, and in that office displayed such remarkable powers of

administration as to have greatly contributed to that series of naval victories which compensated for the defeats of the coalition on the Continent. He did not leave the Admiralty until the year after the Act of Union. The present Lord Spencer smiled when he spoke of Mr. Gladstone's blunder. It showed, with so many other similar indications, how superficial was the venerable statesman's knowledge of the circumstances in which the Act of Union originated, and of the ministers who had given it effect.

Lord Spencer proposed that I should dine at his house with Mr. Morley, whom at that time I had not met. Sir Charles Russell, whose hospitality and friendship I had now for several years enjoyed, made a similar proposal. Mr. Morley was unable to accept Lord Spencer's invitation on that particular evening, but requested me to visit him at his own house. Differing as we did on Irish matters, and on Burke's later life, since our acquaintance began we have continued on cordial terms. Mr. Morley had stated in the House of Commons, and if I am not mistaken also on a public platform, that the Irish Nationalist majority had a right to govern the Unionist minority. He had adopted the extreme democratic principle, which Burke had so strongly condemned, that a mere majority of persons told by the head constituted a people, and that as a majority their will ought to prevail over a minority, however well-educated, respectable, and law-abiding. I always said that this would be great injustice to Unionist Ulster, and contrary to the spirit of the British Constitution, which is so

careful to respect the rights and privileges even of individuals. I intimated to Mr. Morley, and to another Home Rule member of Parliament at his house, that if a Home Rule Bill should be passed it would be in utter ignorance on the part of the British people of the real circumstances of Ireland; that between the two races on Irish soil, bitterly opposed to each other, there was no homogeneity, and therefore not that community of citizenship which would justify the Imperial Parliament in placing them together in a separate and virtually independent Legislature and Government. I went so far as to say that if such a step were taken it would be found so utterly impracticable and disastrous as to have to be retraced, no matter at what cost and even by force.

To this and other representations of a similar character Mr. Morley has always listened with the greatest good temper. He not only talks well but can listen well. He appears the very soul of candour. He is habitually an assenter, appearing often to agree while really disagreeing.

Lord Hartington was always the same. May after May, as I saw him at Devonshire House, during what might be called the Unionist interregnum of six years, he always spoke the same language. In the marquis there was no variableness, no shadow of turning. At a time when eminent public men, recently supposed to have political principles and earnest convictions in favour of the integrity and unity of the kingdom, and the maintenance of the authority of the Parliament at Westminster over the two islands, had suddenly

changed, and followed Mr. Gladstone like a flock of sheep, it was something to have in Lord Hartington one in whom the Unionists could confidently trust, and who would be to-morrow what he was to-day, and had been yesterday. That he felt painfully the sacrifice he had been compelled to make was evident. But in making it he had never hesitated, and it is quite certain that he has never regretted it. That he had some degree of scorn for the men who had accompanied him to Ulster as a Unionist as well as a Liberal leader, and had so soon afterwards repudiated their own words, and what had been considered their deliberate convictions, there could be no doubt. But it was never openly expressed. It was only somewhat indirectly indicated.

Mr. Chamberlain visited Glasgow in the session of 1887. He had spoken very emphatically on the maintenance of the Union, and, in the event of an Irish Parliament being conceded, the justice of giving to Ulster another Parliament of its own, and of not leaving the Unionists in a more or less hopeless minority among representatives of the South and West of Ireland to whom they were utterly opposed. On this question Mr. Chamberlain, too, always expressed the same decided opinion. When I saw him on his return to London I congratulated him on the stand he had made. "Ulster," he said, "must hold its own; it is the very key of the position." There was a desire among the Ulster Liberals, and indeed many of the Conservatives, that Mr. Chamberlain should pay them a visit during the autumn. He

was obviously gratified by the wish thus entertained, and gave a conditional promise that he would carry it into effect.

Sitting one evening next to a reverend friend of Mr. Gladstone at the Devonshire Club, I mentioned to him the distinguished persons I had seen among the principal Liberals and Liberal Unionists in London. "Why do you not see Mr. Gladstone?" this gentleman asked. I replied that I did not think under the changed circumstances an interview with Mr. Gladstone would be at all agreeable to himself; that I had for him great respect and admiration, and had received kindnesses from him and acknowledgments of the services I had tried to render him in Ulster when during his two long administrations he was carrying out his great Irish reforms: but that it would not be pleasant to ask for an interview with one whom I had been accustomed to venerate and have to say to him: "You are utterly wrong in your Irish Home Rule policy."

"Well," said the reverend gentleman, "I shall be writing to Mr. Gladstone this Friday evening before I leave town. I can at least mention to him that you are in London, have seen many persons on Irish affairs, and could perhaps see him on these matters." At the Devonshire Club on the following Monday I found a letter left by Mr. Herbert Gladstone, stating that he had been waiting for me, and desired to say that as his father had been informed I was in town, he would be happy to have a conversation with me that afternoon according to my con-

venience at Carlton House-terrace, on his arrival from Dollis Hill, or later in the House of Commons.

On being shown into his study at the time appointed, I found Mr. Gladstone sitting at the window having an afternoon tea. He graciously asked me to take a cup, and then what to me at least was a memorable conversation began. I said: "Mr. Gladstone, I am sure you will understand how painful it has been to me to differ from you on the Irish Home Rule question, or, indeed, on any question."

"Oh, yes," he said, "I know it."

"I have been now about twenty-two years in the North of Ireland, with every opportunity of watching the progress of events day by day all that time. I am sorry, very sorry indeed, that I have not been able to follow you in your course since the beginning of last year.'

Mr. Gladstone raised his finger in a mildly reproving manner, and said, "Your Burke, your Burke, you know."

"I cannot think that Burke would have been in favour of handing Ireland over to a Nationalist majority, such as they are."

"He would have been opposed to the Union, as you must know."

"He had been three years in his grave when the Act of Union was carried."

"But his friend, Dr. Laurence—you know of course how intimate they were—said, in the debates on the Union Bill, that Burke would have been opposed to the Union."

"I was not aware of it."

"See the Parliamentary History on this point."

"Burke was never in favour of governing a country independently of the property of the country, as would be the case under Irish Home Rule. I have no doubt, however, that he would have been opposed to the Act of Union without Catholic Emancipation being a part of it, and an indispensable part."

There was a pause. Mr. Gladstone resumed the conversation with the remark that he was sorry the Ulster people, and especially so many of the old Liberals, were opposed to Irish Home Rule.

"So they have always been."

"But," continued Mr. Gladstone, "in introducing the Home Rule Bill, I stated that I was willing to consider any plan for a separate Government in Ulster, or even a part of Ulster. I am still ready to consider any scheme your friends can suggest. There will be some difficulty, I know, in inducing certain parties to consent to such a proposal, but I have no doubt that we can carry it. Let the Ulster Unionists think over a plan."

"I do not think, Mr. Gladstone, that at the present time at least, even the Liberal Unionists would take the question into consideration. They consider that, the constituencies having been appealed to on it, and by a large majority having declared against Home Rule, the question is for some time at least settled."

"This is to be very short-sighted. The subject has been postponed for a time; but only for a time, and a short time."

"In introducing your Home Rule Bill, Mr. Gladstone, you stated that the sixty miles of sea rolling between the two countries increased the difficulties of governing Ireland. If you come to the coast of Down, near Belfast, you will find that there are only twenty miles of sea between Scotland and Ireland; and if you go further up the coast of Antrim, you will see that Ulster is only separated by eleven nautical miles from Scotland.'

"Ah! Have another cup of tea."

This was the principal part of the conversation with Mr. Gladstone. There were, indeed, other observations which it is not necessary to record. During this Home Rule struggle some deputations from Belfast had, subsequently, interviews with the veteran statesman. They stated, as will be seen, on returning to Ulster, that they had been treated by Mr. Gladstone with something like even a want of politeness. To them, at least, his manner was undoubtedly brusque.

I feel bound, however, to say that to me personally, in the study at Carlton House-terrace, he was most courteous and friendly. He took everything I said in the best possible part. He listened attentively, and replied with much animation, but also with the utmost kindness. Only once in the course of the conversation did I receive a rebuke. It was for using the words "Gladstonian Liberal" instead of Liberal. According to Mr. Gladstone, there were no Gladstonian Liberals as distinguished from Liberal Unionists. The Gladstonians were the only Liberals. This was said very gently. A little time afterwards Mr.

Gladstone gave a similar rebuke to a deputation that waited upon him to present him with an address and a Kidderminster carpet.

I was surprised on leaving him that I had said so plainly what I thought in opposition to his new Irish policy, and even regretted that I could express nothing in its favour. I comforted myself with the words of Burke, "I had this to say or nothing."

Some time elapsed before I had an opportunity of seeing how far Mr. Gladstone was accurate in what he said about Dr. Laurence having remarked, in the discussions on the Bill, that Burke would have been opposed to the Union. The statement came upon me with surprise. Dr. Laurence in the debates on the Union did say that Burke would have been opposed to the Bill: it did not propose to emancipate the Catholics. Dr. Laurence also said that his illustrious friend had expressed great doubts whether the resolution of 1782 conceding Irish Parliamentary independence did not go too far. The learned gentleman himself also in the protracted discussions repeatedly declared that to give a hundred Irish members the power to vote at Westminster on all British questions, they being perfect strangers, was most objectionable. Burke having been too, Dr. Laurence implied, the author of the celebrated resolution that the influence of the Crown had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished would certainly have objected to twenty Irish placemen sitting in the United Parliament. This objection might be thought rather in favour of the principle of the Bill than the contrary. Had

those Irish placemen been excluded from the measure, it might have been improved, without being in any way injured. It may be added that Dr. Laurence was wrong, as Sir Henry James also afterwards remarked to me, in apparently ascribing to Burke the authorship of the celebrated resolution that the influence of the Crown had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished. It was proposed by Dunning, on the 10th of April, 1780. He acted, not with the Rockingham, but the Shelburne party.

On returning to Belfast I mentioned to friends privately in the Ulster Reform Club that Mr. Gladstone thought they ought to come to an understanding as to what they would agree to with respect to Ulster in a new Home Rule Bill. The answer I received was just what I expected. Those members of the club were all Liberal Unionists, and, when it was formed, enthusiastic supporters of Mr. Gladstone. They now said: "It is no part of our business to form any plan for the future of Ulster to render it easier to carry an Irish Home Rule Bill. We are decidedly opposed to any such measure. We are not going to try to make Mr. Gladstone's task easier. We wish to remain as we are; but if we are driven into our last ditch and have to make a choice between the two evils, we shall prefer absolute separation from Great Britain to any Irish Home Rule Bill."

This was the invariable response. That this deep conviction of the serious danger and utter impracticability of any Home Rule was generally entertained in Ulster both by Liberals and Conservatives, I have

never had the least reason for doubting. In opposition to such a measure the people were and are terribly in earnest. To attempt to hide or to misrepresent this fact would not be honest.

Events were then in progress not at all likely to render Home Rule more acceptable to the supporters of the Union, that is of all law and order in the North of Ireland. Parliament was not prorogued until late in September. The session had been almost exclusively confined to Irish affairs, with the long debates on the Address, the new rules of procedure, the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, and the new Irish Land Bill, including, as has been stated, for three years the revision of the judicial rents according to prices in consequence of the prevailing depression in agriculture. The important amendment to this effect was especially the work of the Liberal Unionists. Other limiting or restricting amendments accepted by the Government in the House of Lords were not, from the point of view of the Ulster tenant farmers, regarded as improvements.

These men were beset by all the seductions of the National League. Every effort was used to bring them to the Home Rule side. An English deputation of Home Rulers came at this time to Belfast and to the neighbouring counties, with that most amiable gentleman, the late Professor Thorold Rogers, M.P., at their head. The professor repeated the common fallacy that the Ulster Liberals had degenerated because they did not follow Mr. Gladstone in his new Home Rule policy. He asked, as

though the question hardly admitted of a denial, "Why was it that the courage, justice, and magnanimity which were in the minds of the people of Ulster more than a century ago had evaporated?" The answer was obvious, and it was promptly given. The ex-Member for Bermondsey was publicly told that: "The liberties for which our fathers fought and died have nearly all been conceded, and Englishmen now possess no privileges which the men of Ulster, as well as those of all Ireland, do not, or may not, enjoy." This was quite true. Yet Mr. Gladstone and most of those who were acting with him at that time have continued to use the language of Professor Rogers. The fact is, that every reform which was asked for by the Ulster Whigs and the Volunteers a century ago, every reform which the United Irishmen demanded, until, under Wolfe Tone and others, they became a treasonable confederacy seeking for separation through the arms of the French Republic, has been conceded, and great reforms have also been granted which were not then asked for, and neither expected nor desired.

The very day after a meeting was held by this English deputation in Ballymoney, following the one held in Belfast, Mr. W. O'Brien was put on his trial at Mitchelstown for intimidation. That the police at Mitchelstown acted prudently in forcibly conducting through the assembled crowd two reporters of the Government to the platform can scarcely be said. That, however, they were brutally assailed, and were obliged to defend themselves, admits of little doubt.

In Belfast more people, and inoffensive people too, at windows and bars out of the line of fire, were shot by the police during the preceding year 1886, than at Mitchelstown at this time; but of this no complaint was made by the Nationalists, who were now denouncing the Unionist Chief Secretary as a murderer.

Mr. Balfour, with the authority conferred by the Crimes Act, was doing what he could to restore law and order. The powers of proclamation conferred by the recent measure were vigorously used. The contest between the Irish Chief Secretary and his Nationalist adversaries and their English allies seemed at first unequal. It was thought that he would be overmatched, and that law and order might really for the time go down.

CHAPTER X

1887–1888

Mr. Chamberlain's Visit to Ulster—An Enthusiastic Reception—The Inequalities in the Irish Representation—Mr. Chamberlain's Two Speeches in the Ulster Hall of Belfast—Mr. Jesse Collings—Sir Wm. Thomson—Mr. Chamberlain at Coleraine—"This is a more excellent way"—Mr. Gladstone's Reply—The Contrast between Mr. Chamberlain in Belfast and Mr. Gladstone at Nottingham—A Meeting with Closed Doors of Protestant Home Rulers—Home Rule Political Tourists in Ireland—Mr. Balfour's Continued Struggle against Lawlessness and Crime.

It was at this crisis, in the second week of October, that Mr. Chamberlain paid his well-remembered visit to Ulster. He was, as Lord Hartington had been, and was again to be, the guest of Sir Edward Cowan at Craigavad. Sir Edward met Mr. Chamberlain on his arrival by the short sea passage at Larne Harbour. They and a large party were entertained at the Olderfleet Hotel there by a public spirited gentleman, Mr. Hugh H. Smiley, J.P., who avowed himself to be like Mr. Chamberlain a Radical, but who also like his guest had remained an uncompromising Unionist. On the railway journey

from the harbour to Belfast, Kilroot was pointed out to Mr. Chamberlain as the prebend first held by Swift, and afterwards resigned by him as too dull and lonely. At that time, just at the close of the seventeenth century, Kilroot must indeed have been a very uninteresting place to one who during his whole life suffered from the *saeva indignatio* which his monument in St. Patrick's Cathedral sternly records. Carrickfergus Castle awakened great interest in Mr. Chamberlain's mind. The whole railway journey up to Belfast, by the shores of the Lough through a prosperous and contented country, had a picturesqueness and eloquence of its own. Just indeed as we reached the entrance to the Belfast Harbour, the visitor made some remark on the slob lands which had not yet been reclaimed, and soon afterwards the train stopped in the Northern Counties Station. The saloon carriage was immediately surrounded by a number of Ulster Liberals, who gave their visitor a hearty welcome.

As Sir Edward Cowan's carriage with his guest in it emerged from the station, nothing could exceed the enthusiasm with which Mr. Chamberlain was received. Efforts had been made by the Nationalists to persuade the Orangemen that they had been contemptuously overlooked in the arrangements for the Thursday's visit. They utterly failed. Mr. Chamberlain was almost the first distinguished public man who had as a Unionist visited Belfast since Mr. Gladstone and the larger part of the Liberal party had gone over to Home Rule. The Protestant artisans, just at their

dinner-hour, assembled in their thousands to give the Liberal Unionist statesman a most hearty welcome. That Belfast Tory and Orange working men should thus be cheering to the echo the great Birmingham Radical was a phenomenon which two years before, at the time of Lord Hartington's visit, would have been thought incredible and impossible. This miracle Mr. Gladstone had worked in his own despite. The horses of the carriage were taken out opposite Great George's-street, and Mr. Chamberlain and his host were dragged through applauding crowds, along York-street, the new Royal-avenue, past the Ulster Reform Club, which, like nearly all important buildings, was gaily decorated, down the High-street, and across the Queen's Bridge, to the County Down Railway Station, whence a special train conveyed the party to Craigavad. Nearly everywhere flags were displayed, the Union Jack being of course the most prominent. It was remarked that the reception was a royal one.

At the banquet that evening in the Ulster Hall the enthusiasm was equally great. Mr. Chamberlain's entertainers were indeed the very flower of the Ulster Liberal party, which had for twenty years stood by Mr. Gladstone in all his Irish remedial policy, and had during all their lives, as their fathers had done before them, asserted Liberal principles in Ulster against the greatest and the most discouraging odds. Some disappointment was felt at Mr. Chamberlain's speech being so short. It only occupied half-an-hour in delivery. He addressed himself principally to two questions, the position of the loyal Unionist minority

in Ireland—the majority in Ulster—and the very unfair state of the Irish representation. On the Monday evening when he left Birmingham, in reply to a complimentary address from his friends there, he said that in undertaking this visit to Ireland he sought especially to direct public attention to the claims of the minority, which had hitherto been so much neglected. "It was not," he observed at the banquet, "an ordinary minority. It was not a minority which could be justly represented merely from a numerical point of view. On ordinary questions according to Liberal principles the will of the majority ought to prevail. It was, however, a different thing when a great constitutional change was to be made putting a minority in one part of the kingdom absolutely in the power of the majority to whom they were diametrically opposed. Such great constitutional changes ought not to be entered on, except by what became something like unanimity among the people and in the Legislature."

Mr. Gladstone had said that he would not look beyond the ballot-boxes. He saw a majority of Nationalist members, and he would not inquire how that majority was composed. As a fact, however, while out of the thirty-three seats now in Ulster the Nationalists claimed to have a majority of one, they had not a majority of the votes, and the representation throughout Ireland was most unfair and indefensible. The statistics Mr. Chamberlain gave were unanswerable; they have never been questioned; but we have recently seen that even when

the Home Rule Liberals have taken up the cry of one man one vote, they have made no attempt and have shown no desire to give to the same vote equal power. Under the transparent pretext that a new distribution of seats would require time, a measure with this object was put into the background, though based on a genuine Liberal policy, while to give one man one vote, without giving a fair redistribution of seats, would increase the anomalies of the Irish representation.

One of the four divisions of Belfast, the east, has, according to reliable registers, a population of nearly 86,000 and some 12,000 registered electors. The town of Newry, which is, like for the most part the East Division of Belfast, in the county of Down, has a population all told of little more now than 11,000, or less than the registered electors of East Belfast. Yet it has a representative, and returns a Nationalist. Those 11,000 people with 1,847 electors balance the 12,000 electors and the 86,000 people in the East Belfast division. The city of Cork, too, returns two members, both of course Nationalists, though its whole population is little over that of this one Belfast division, while its registered electors are 1,100 fewer. The borough of Galway has a population of 16,942, and 1,909 electors; Kilkenny a population of 13,323, and 1,806 electors. The whole aggregate population of Newry, Kilkenny, and Galway amounts to little more than 41,000, and their number of registered electors to 5,562. They return three Home Rule members to the House of Commons. Belfast, with a registered

population in the Parliamentary borough of 273,065 —and now, indeed, virtually 300,000—and 35,846 electors, returns only four members. Three of the four are balanced by Newry, Galway, and Kilkenny. Cork, with its two members, increases the inequality. The returns are of the general election in 1892. Mr. Chamberlain showed, in constituencies which return Nationalist representatives for the counties, their populations to be about 30,000 each as compared with 50,000 represented by each Unionist constituency.

It is strange that a statesman like Mr. Gladstone should have refused to look beyond the mere list of members. He saw them, and he would see nothing else. He took out his watch and pointed at the hands, but he would not inquire whether the hour and minutes indicated were right. It is, however, notorious that he was in error, that his watch was much too fast, and that the conclusion he drew from it was quite wrong. When the elder Pitt told George II. that in the cause of Admiral Byng the House of Commons was inclined to mercy, he received the reply, "You have taught me, sir, to look for the voice of my people in other places than the House of Commons." This has been called by Macaulay a high and just compliment to Pitt. A similar compliment on this Irish question could not be paid to Mr. Gladstone. He looked at the number of Irish members relatively returned as Nationalists and Unionists, and he would see nothing else. He would not consider how thoroughly unjust to the

Unionists the present Irish representation is, and how utterly false is the conclusion he thus deduced.

Mr. Chamberlain's speech produced a great effect. At its close indeed some of his Liberal entertainers thought the peroration about the Unionists imitating their ancestors in the city of Derry to be "a little Orange." But there was nothing in it of which any reasonable complaint could be made. Previous to the great meeting in the Ulster Hall the following evening there was a reception in the Reform Club. Mr. Chamberlain subsequently dined there with his host, and he and his friends had afterwards some difficulty in getting into the Ulster Hall at all, even by the back entrance. It had to be announced that "no tickets could be had for love or money." The streets both at the front and behind the building were blocked by enthusiastic crowds; the Orangemen as well as the Conservatives and Liberal Unionists now mustering in their full strength. With his large municipal experience Mr. Chamberlain declared the police arrangements to be very bad. But the people were thoroughly good-humoured and all of one mind. It would not have been safe to attempt anything like a Nationalist disturbance. This was very well known. The days for breaking up Liberal meetings, which had now become Unionist, had gone by. A larger or more enthusiastic gathering was never held in the great hall which, as has been said, has witnessed so many large political demonstrations.

Mr. Chamberlain's speech was longer than at the dinner of the previous evening. It was equally

emphatic on the Ulster question. Mr. Gladstone had been announced to speak at Nottingham in the following week. In anticipation of those speeches Mr. Chamberlain put to him several questions of which the purport was very plain. Mr. Gladstone was asked to say whether he adhered to his Home Rule plan of the last year, whether he would coerce Ulster into the acceptance of any such measure, or whether he was prepared to give to that province, or to part of it, a separate government. The large audience was asked what they would do in the event of such a measure becoming law? The answer came unanimously from the lips of thousands, "Fight!" "We all know," said Mr. Chamberlain, "that though Mr. Gladstone has hinted something about being willing to concede a separate government here, he has proposed no plan to effect this object, and will not propose one. He dares not do it. Mr. Parnell has unmistakably intimated that he will have no Home Rule for Ireland without Ulster being included in it, and Mr. Gladstone must do what Mr. Parnell wishes. There has been a Hawarden treaty as well as a Kilmainham treaty." Mr. Jesse Collings, introduced to the audience by the Chairman as Mr. Chamberlain's colleague, following his friend, as he had done at the dinner the evening before, caused a deep impression by his obvious moral earnestness. Then came Sir William Thomson, now Lord Kelvin, whose father had been connected with the Royal Academical Institution in Belfast, and who bore an honoured name in Ulster. Mr. Maclean, who then represented the

Woodstock Division of Oxfordshire, produced a great effect by his fine presence and his manly style, in which Mr. Morley was somewhat severely treated. Mr. Morley was at that time very unpopular in Belfast, though it is right to say that he has since risen in public estimation there, even among his most uncompromising political opponents.

Mr. Chamberlain's second appearance before an Ulster audience had been even more successful than the first. The attention of all the public press of the United Kingdom was now directed to the member for West Birmingham and to Unionist Ulster. The Nationalist newspapers commented on the demonstrations in Belfast with their usual bitterness. The *Freeman's Journal* thought fit to declare that the people of the whole kingdom would not be bullied by half an Irish province, and it went so far as to threaten Mr. Chamberlain with personal violence on the part of Irish American Nationalists in the event of him paying his intended visit to Canada.

The day after the great popular demonstration in the Ulster Hall, Mr. Chamberlain went to Coleraine. At Belfast he had addressed the merchants, the manufacturers, the tradesmen, and the artisans. At Coleraine he was to make his third public appearance in Ulster, and address the tenant farmers of Antrim and Londonderry on the land question. The emissaries of the National League and the Plan of Campaign continued busily at work in Ulster. No effort was spared to induce the Protestant tenant farmers to join

in the illegal combinations to get not only a forcible reduction of rents, but also, as was said in the favourite phrase, to abolish landlordism. They who had good opportunities of knowing what was passing in the minds of some of the Unionist tenant farmers felt much anxiety. It was not yet certain whether Mr. Balfour's struggle to maintain law and order, though aided by the new Criminal Law Amendment Act, would be successful. That law with respect to proclaimed meetings was being openly defied by the Nationalist newspapers. *United Ireland*, notwithstanding the imprisonment of its editor, continued the publication of the reports of such meetings: so also did the newspaper of the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Mr. Sullivan, even while he was then being prosecuted. There was undoubtedly some hesitation even among the Northern tenant farmers who, as Unionists, had no sympathy with Irish Nationalism. Mr. Chamberlain's appearance at Coleraine, therefore, in one of the great strongholds of Ulster land agitation, and among the independent tenant farmers, who had a very decided will of their own, was watched with the greatest interest.

A tent capable of holding 5,000 people had been erected on the Fair Hill. The Union Jack floated from the ridge. A massive platform had been set up in the very large tent, which had been supplied with 210 gas jets. All the way along the Belfast and Northern Counties line of railway, wherever there was a station, Mr. Chamberlain was heartily greeted. He had, as was said at the time, a triumphal

progress. The horses were taken out of the carriage in which he had to go to the Town Hall to receive political addresses, and a number of stalwart tenant farmers dragged him to the building. At the new marquee, which had been intended for 5,000 people, 8,000 instead of 5,000 assembled, and their enthusiasm was extraordinary. When he rose to speak, the whole audience stood up, waved hats and handkerchiefs, and seemed never to tire of cheering.

Before Mr. Chamberlain came to the question immediately concerning the tenant farmers, he dwelt on the difference between the municipalities of Dublin and Belfast. In Dublin, the Lord Mayor had a salary of 3,000*l.* a year; in Belfast, the Mayor had no salary at all. The rates in Dublin were very much higher than in Belfast, the difference on one class of property being a third, and on another nearly a half. He especially directed his criticisms to the proceedings of the National League and the Plan of Campaign, while pointing out, too, the utter failure of Mr. Parnell's Land Migration Company. He showed that the new Land Act had done much for the leaseholders, and regretted that it had not done more, that the revision of the judicial rents had been agreed to by the Government at the suggestion of himself and his fellow Liberal Unionists, and that the question of arrears might also have been equitably dealt with if the Nationalist members had been willing to allow all the debts of the tenants to be placed in the same category as those due to the landlords.

Mr. Chamberlain fully accepted the resolution for

getting rid of dual ownership. But he told the tenants very plainly that this could not be done now merely by money out of the Treasury. He said that he had himself laid before the Round Table Conference a plan for dealing with this great question through Irish resources, the added contributions to Ireland from the public Exchequer, and the security of the land of Ireland itself, with the transfer being carried out by the local authorities. He declared that he had reason for knowing that his proposals had been submitted at the time of the Conference to Mr. Gladstone, and he had also reason for believing that the Unionist Government then in office were prepared to adopt a similar plan. The difficulty was with the National League and the Irish Nationalist members of Parliament. "I am speaking," said Mr. Chamberlain, "not to those who cheer the members of the National League; I am speaking to honest men, and I believe I express your sentiments when I say that, although you intend to look after your own interests, you do not intend to rob anybody else." This declaration was received with great cheering. The cheering was again and again renewed, when, at the conclusion of his speech, Mr. Chamberlain emphatically said: "I am encouraged by the manifestations I witness of your enthusiasm and your determination, and you may rest assured that so far as my poor abilities and influence extend they will always be used in your behalf and in your name to resist the outrage and the insult that will be put on the loyalty of Ulster if it were

submitted to the degrading domination of a Dublin Parliament."

The effect of this speech could scarcely be exceeded. It was not momentary ; it continued long ; it has not even yet lost its force. "This is a more excellent way," said one Presbyterian farmer to another. "Ay, maun," was the reply ; "sure this is better than the Land League." With those tenant farmers at Coleraine the presence of the kindly and sympathetic Duke of Abercorn was justly regarded as a sign of the times. It was asked, Who could have believed two years ago that the Duke of Abercorn and the Radical Joseph Chamberlain could meet on the same Unionist platform, surrounded by the old Liberal tenant farmers of North Derry, who had voted for such supporters of Mr. Gladstone as Professor Smyth, Mr. Hugh Law, Sir Thomas M'Clure, and Mr. Andrew Porter, the present Irish Master of the Rolls ?

Mr. Chamberlain too at Coleraine was the guest of Mr. Daniel Taylor, who had formerly been returned as member of Parliament for that borough as a supporter of Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Taylor, after defeating Sir Hervey Bruce, had been described by Lord Beaconsfield as one of nine dangerous Radical and revolutionary politicians, who had deprived him of some of his staunchest Irish supporters. This excellent gentleman was, however, one of the most quiet and unobtrusive of men, and while his valuable life lasted remained, like all his Ulster Liberal colleagues with one exception, true to the cause of the Union.

With Mr. Taylor as his host, on the following day,

Friday, the 14th of October, Mr. Chamberlain visited the Giant's Causeway, and was afterwards entertained with a large party, at the Causeway Hotel. Lord Macnaghten was one of the guests. Mr. Chamberlain delivered another speech, recapitulating several of the points respecting Ulster on which he had already spoken. On Saturday he returned to Belfast, had luncheon with the members of the Ulster Reform Club, and then left to return to Birmingham, as he had come to Belfast, by the Larne and Stranraer route with the short sea passage. It was a lovely autumn afternoon, and from the deck of the steamer in the harbour the Scottish coast was plainly visible. Mr. Chamberlain happily took advantage of this circumstance, and in a few parting words expressed the hope that Ulster and Scotland would always be united under the same Parliament and Government.

Thus this memorable visit ended. It had fully accomplished Mr. Chamberlain's object. Public attention had been called to Ulster from the Unionist point of view in a manner it had never before been done, and the formidable nature of the problem he had undertaken to solve was especially and directly called to Mr. Gladstone's notice.

As the illustrious veteran was to speak at Nottingham the next week, the Ulster Unionists, who had given Mr. Chamberlain so magnificent a reception, looked eagerly for the answer Mr. Gladstone would give to the questions his late colleague had put.

But in his first speech, three days after Mr.

Chamberlain left Belfast, Mr. Gladstone while addressing the Liberal Federation gave no reply to his questioner. He spoke of the victories gained at recent bye-elections, and congratulated his hearers on some of the Liberal Unionists, whom he mentioned by name, coming back to his leadership. It was noticed, however, that he said not one word of Sir George Trevelyan, who had so recently been returned as a Home Ruler in Glasgow. He evidently thought that the less said about Sir George the better. He then delivered an elaborate and detailed attack on the administration of the new Criminal Law Amendment Act. They who read that speech from the Ulster point of view saw plainly that it was intended to throw as many difficulties as possible in the way of the Government in Ireland: that it was to encourage the lawlessness against which Mr. Balfour was now resolutely engaged in struggling. Mr. Gladstone even attacked personally the Irish Chief Secretary in language such as it is not customary for public men of such eminence to employ towards others. He declared that Mr. Balfour's words were pestilential, that he was audacious, that his officials were provoking the people to outrage and then shooting them down. He went so far as to accuse a well-known colonel, who was a landlord's agent, of presenting a rifle at a boy, and being with difficulty restrained from firing. To those who wished under all circumstances to retain their respect and even veneration for Mr. Gladstone, it was painful afterwards to see

that he had to withdraw such a grossly libellous charge under a threat of legal proceedings.

Just as this speech was delivered Socialists had been summarily convicted and sentenced to imprisonment by the police magistrates in London for disorderly and riotous conduct in the streets. Of this Mr. Gladstone could make no complaint. His own Lord Lieutenant, Lord Spencer, and his own Irish Chief Secretaries, Mr. Forster and Sir George Trevelyan, had administered Coercion Acts passed by his second Government far more stringent than the one Mr. Balfour was then endeavouring to enforce, of which Mr. Gladstone complained as having been carried by the closure, and by other expedients interfering with free discussion in the House of Commons.

Still, the Home Rule Liberal leader said nothing of Mr. Chamberlain's speeches in Ulster. On the next day, however, he again spoke. An Irish Home Ruler had telegraphed to him that Dr. Kane, the great Orange authority in Belfast, had repudiated on the previous evening Mr. Chamberlain's reference to the possibility of a separate Ulster, in whole or in part, and that Colonel Saunderson had also condemned his scheme of land purchase through Irish securities, and the intervention of county boards. In the speech at the skating-rink in Nottingham, the day after the one at the Liberal Federation Conference, Mr. Gladstone read this telegram from his supporter amid great applause. Dr. Kane afterwards denied its correctness. This was all the reply made

in any way to Mr. Chamberlain and his challenges. Mr. Gladstone referred pointedly to Lord Hartington : on Mr. Chamberlain he was virtually silent. He dwelt, however, on a long list of British Bills, including a Registration Bill, one man one vote, a Local Government Bill, the reform of the liquor laws, and the disestablishment of the Churches of Scotland and Wales as future measures to be carried by the Liberal party after an Irish Home Rule Bill should be passed and an Irish Parliament and Government set up.

But none of these measures was to be brought forward, nor could be brought forward, he said, until the Irish question, which had existed for six hundred years, was disposed of for ever. Mr. Gladstone concluded this second great speech at Nottingham by declaring that the Liberal party had never taken up a cause which it did not win, and that it would carry to a triumphant victory one of the noblest causes that ever awakened the energies of man, or ever asked and won the blessing of the Most High. In a similar strain, though those two elaborate speeches were certainly in no pacific spirit, and were not intended to diminish the difficulties of governing Ireland by Mr. Balfour and his colleagues, Mr. Gladstone told the students of the Nottingham Congregational Institute for Theological and Missionary Training that the work in which he was engaged, that of promoting Irish Home Rule, was one of strife for the moment, but was in its end and aim one of peace, and one which he trusted it was not profane or irregular to say that the Prince of Peace would re

cognise and bless. Whatever cause Mr. Gladstone has taken up, and whatever side of it he has advocated, sometimes being on the one, and sometimes on the other, he has always assumed and declared that with that cause, and with that side of it at that particular time, were the highest moral and religious forces of the world. To doubt this has seemed to him little short of profanity.

The contrast between Mr. Chamberlain's visit to Ulster and Mr. Gladstone's to Nottingham at a great crisis in the affairs of Ireland may be thought remarkable. Taken together these visits present a somewhat instructive study. The difference was that Mr. Chamberlain in Ulster addressed audiences vitally concerned in the great issue. They considered that, as British citizens and as free men, they had no right to be placed in what they thought an unfair and even defenceless position without their own expressed consent. They took their stand on constitutional grounds. They appealed to the good faith of Parliaments and Governments. They maintained that they ought not to be put in the power of men with whom they had virtually no historic, no social, no civic associations, from whom they were politically separated, who made no secret of their hostility to them because of their attachment to the British connection, and whom Mr. Gladstone had himself as Prime Minister not long before declared to be marching through rapine to the dismemberment of the empire.

These convictions then animated all the Unionists

of Ulster. They were expressed at another great conference of Liberal Unionists in London. They have not diminished as time has rolled on: very much indeed the contrary. They are entertained more resolutely now than they have ever previously been. Year after year they have become more and more intensified. The Protestant Home Rulers who sent Mr. Gladstone telegrams and published resolutions of meetings, which, as on the 4th of November of 1887 in Belfast, assumed that they were a great political party, met in a small room and did not allow reporters to be present. The excuse for this secrecy was that they were afraid of being boycotted. But this was not the real reason. Those Protestant Home Rulers were all thoroughly well known, and, to do them justice, have never made any secret of their political opinions. They met with closed doors because they were so few in number. At this meeting of the 4th of November, when the resolutions were forwarded not only to the local press, but to the press agencies, for publication throughout the United Kingdom, it was said, and the statement was never contradicted, that there were not twenty persons present.

Facts like these Mr. Gladstone was not told. He always made the most of the not very accurate information he received from Home Rulers in the North of Ireland. A small Home Rule Association in one district of the county of Down was believed and represented by him to be the great Liberal county organisation which had returned as his former

supporter Mr. James Sharman Crawford, and which had so vigorously withstood the great territorial influences of the houses of Downshire and Londonderry. A public dinner was given to Mr. Sexton in Belfast by his supporters. Mr. Gladstone afterwards stated that half of the diners were Protestants. As a fact only eight Protestants were present.

In the South of Ireland, too, political tourists in Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule interests were quite common during the autumn and winter of 1887. Their information also very much misled the venerable statesman, who generally succeeds in convincing himself of the truth of what he wishes to believe. From considerable experience of them it may be said that those political tourists also generally see what they wish to see, and they endeavour to see nothing else.

Mr. Gladstone's errors and exaggerations with regard to the Mitchelstown disturbances arose from believing too implicitly the reports of these English Home Rule visitors to Ireland. The misstatement about the rifle said to be presented at the boy by a gallant colonel was afterwards admitted by Mr. Gladstone to have been caused by a learned professor and member of Parliament, from whom accuracy might have been expected. One sensation was followed by another. Mr. O'Brien was convicted, and his conviction was confirmed. Then followed the imprisonment, the resistance to the prison garb, and the surreptitious inexpressibles, which to the Unionists, who regarded the proceedings from a distance, ap-

peared simply ludicrous. Some of the Ulster Liberal Unionists contrasted such serio-comic business with the acts of their grandfathers who were United Irishmen, and who, as members of that confederacy, had had at least the courage to brave exile, the dungeon, and the scaffold.

Another sensation was caused by the report of the probable appearance of Mr. Herbert Gladstone at a Home Rule meeting in Dromore, county Tyrone. It was said that the meeting would be proclaimed. A counter demonstration was being organised, when it was announced that the expected visitor would not come.

Early in the year 1888 the Marquis of Ripon and Mr. Morley did address Home Rule meetings in Dublin. Their appearance was represented as an answer to Mr. Chamberlain's Ulster visit, and to one of Lord Hartington's to the Irish metropolis. But at that time it was becoming evident that Mr. Balfour was not the forcibly feeble Irish Chief Secretary he had been represented, that, though just fault might be found with the manner in which some of his subordinates were administering the Crimes Act, his courage and tenacity of purpose were producing an effect, and that he was at least not, as had been anticipated by his somewhat unscrupulous opponents, and by Mr. Gladstone himself, being worsted in the war he was waging against lawlessness, disaffection, and crime. Once more the Queen's writs were running from the Giant's Causeway to Bantry Bay. Though another frightful murder had recently been

committed in Kerry, that county was becoming quieter than it had ever been before under Lord Spencer and Sir George Trevelyan. The forces of anarchy were checked in their advance, and their ranks were visibly wavering. This result had at least been produced without any support from the Home Rule Liberal Opposition and their great leader, and with, indeed, for the first time in the history of British parties, very much the contrary.

CHAPTER XI

1888—1889.

Not an Irish Session—The Amendments of Mr. Shaw-Lefevre—Mr. Gladstone's Demand for a Dissolution—Consistency—Lord Hartington's Second Visit to Belfast—A Remarkable Statement—Effect of the Visits of Liberal Unionist Statesmen to Ulster—Mr. Gladstone's Letter on Lord Hartington's Visit—"You are another"—Mr. Gladstone's Birmingham Speeches—Ulster Protestant "Nonconformists" Declared by Mr. Gladstone to be only a Handful—A Sudden Change of Feeling—Mr. Gladstone and the Irish "Nonconformist Clergy"—His Change of Attitude on Irish Land Purchase—The Renewal of the Ashbourne Act—Mr. Gladstone and Lord Dufferin in Naples—Lord Dufferin's Speech in Calcutta on St. Andrew's Day.

PARLIAMENT met for the session on the 9th of February. In the Queen's Speech at the prorogation in the September of the last year, 1887, regret was expressed that so many important measures applicable to the other parts of the United Kingdom had had to be postponed to meet the wants and difficulties of Ireland. When Parliament was again called together for business, it was said again "this is not to be an Irish session."

It was not in the ordinary sense an Irish session. At the very beginning indeed there was an Irish

amendment to the Address moved by Mr. G. Shaw-Lefevre, who was no longer regarded with the favour he had been by the Ulster tenant farmers when he was distinguishing himself by advocating the reform of Irish land tenure independently of Home Rule, to which he now appeared to have passionately devoted himself. Mr. Shaw-Lefevre's amendment complained that so little was said in the Queen's Speech about Irish measures, especially dealing with unjust rents, agricultural distress, and evictions such as had taken place at Loughrea and Woodford. This amendment raised indeed the whole Irish question. Mr. Balfour displayed his characteristically dialectical spirit in answering the attack, which was defeated by the usual majority of the Government—that was, between eighty and ninety. Mr. Parnell also introduced a Land Law Amendment Bill especially giving county court judges the power of dealing with arrears of rents by instalments, and also when decrees of ejectment had been obtained before the passing of the Act of reducing the arrears and costs. It was met on the motion for a second reading by an amendment declaring that no such Bill would be satisfactory for the relief of the tenants unless it dealt with the debts of other creditors besides landlords. Here again the majority with the Government was eighty-five. Further amendments to the rules of procedure, Mr. Goschen's successful proposals for the conversion of the National Debt, and the English Local Government Bill were the really important measures of the session. In

dealing with the complicated scheme of local government, the ministers succeeded in showing, contrary to Mr. Gladstone's well-known declaration, that Ireland did not block the way, that a Government thoroughly in earnest could carry measures in the teeth of the most obstructive Opposition.

Though the session of 1888, which after an adjournment in August was resumed in November, was not in the ordinary sense an Irish one, the Irish Home Rule question was still kept in the front, and the Government had to meet a strong vote of censure for what was called their coercionist policy. The bitterness of the language of the Opposition was almost unexampled. The more the cause of law and order seemed to be gaining ground, the more determined were the efforts of the Home Rule Liberals and the Irish Nationalists to impede its progress. Several bye-elections, in the course of the two years since the last appeal to the constituencies, had been unfavourable to the Government. Two of these had only recently occurred. The Opposition insisted that under such circumstances the ministers, with so large a working majority unshaken, ought at once to dissolve the Parliament. Mr. Gladstone had himself begun his system of totting up bye-election returns, from which he proved to his own satisfaction that the ministers had lost the confidence of the constituencies; that what had taken place in some bye-elections would take place nearly everywhere at the next dissolution, and that the people were eagerly looking for the opportunity of returning to a new House of Commons a large Home

Rule majority. He had persuaded himself that such would be the result of another general election, and therefore neglected no occasion for persuading other people of what he was himself convinced. After every successful bye-election for the Opposition, he was ready with his figures to show that what had been done in certain contests would be done in the same proportion by the country generally on the earliest occasion. Hence he assumed that the Government were really acting unconstitutionally in not getting rid of a House of Commons which had been returned in answer to his own appeal, and in which they had still a majority nearly approaching to three figures.

While this demand and the cry against coercion were at the loudest, the Marquis of Hartington in October paid another political visit to Ulster. His former one had taken place, as we have seen, just before the dissolution of the Parliament in the November, 1885. This was now three years ago. Since that time everything appeared to have changed. A revolution had taken place in the relations of the political parties, and even apparently in the characters of public men. "I am sure," wrote Burke, "nothing can hinder public spirit being very suspicious except great consistency." Consistency by the majority of the Liberal party was no longer regarded as a virtue. It had gone quite out of fashion. Even those who loved and admired Mr. Gladstone the most could not but admit that consistency was not, that it had not been for nearly half a century, his special virtue, and that of statesmen,

he now appeared more than ever to be without that great quality. But Lord Hartington went a second time politically to Belfast as, at least, a representative of consistency. He now, however, went under very different circumstances. But his political friends were there the same, his principles and their principles were the same, his host was the same. He stayed under the same roof at Craigwavad: he talked over Irish politics with the other guests in the same library and over the same table.

The only difference was that, while Lord Hartington came three years before as a Liberal, he was now called a Liberal Unionist. He was welcomed, too, by Conservatives, who in 1885 had stood aloof. As on some other occasions, there were arranged both a public banquet in the Ulster Hall and a public meeting in the same place on the following evening. The banquet this time was not confined to Liberals. There were also some distinguished Conservative guests, including the Duke of Abercorn and Lord Bangor. Before the marquis arrived, the tickets had all been taken up, as well as the places in the balconies.

In his speech to his entertainers Lord Hartington made a remarkable statement. It had been said that his suspicion three years ago that his great leader contemplated a surrender to the Nationalists, even while he was appealing to the country to give him a majority against them, induced the marquis to speak then more decidedly against Irish Home Rule than he had previously done. This he now confirmed.

Just before coming to Belfast that autumn he had addressed his own constituents and condemned the Irish Nationalist agitation in a manner of which his veteran leader did not approve, thinking, it seems, that just before the general election more reserve ought to have been shown. On this subject Mr. Gladstone wrote Lord Hartington a letter of remonstrance. It had, however, an effect the directly contrary to what its author had intended. It caused the marquis, as he told his audience, to watch carefully the public utterances of his leader, and at least take care that, so far as he was himself concerned, there should be no mistake as to his position on the question. By his attitude in the very hall in which he and his Ulster friends were again assembled he had encouraged other Liberal members to follow his example. The statement, calmly and deliberately made, was received with much cheering.

This was succeeded by laughter when he replied to a taunt of Mr. Morley to the effect that his former visit to Belfast had failed in its professed electioneering object. There were, Lord Hartington said, a Conservative party, an Irish Nationalist party, and a Liberal Unionist party in Ireland. But where was the Gladstonian party in that country? Could Mr. Gladstone, independently of Mr. Parnell, return a single member from Ireland? Could he count upon a single voter? He had none at all. Any of Mr. Parnell's members would be ready at his word of command to vote against Mr. Gladstone and his followers. Mr. Gladstone's position in Ireland was a

great deal worse than it was in Scotland and in England. The quiet ironical tone in which these sentences were uttered greatly delighted all persons present. In the Liberals of Ulster Mr. Gladstone had found the most devoted adherents; but that party had been scattered, and, as far as the Irish Nationalists could do it, destroyed on account of their devotion to the Union.

This speech was much commented upon both by the Nationalists in Ireland and the Home Rule Liberals in Great Britain. They asserted that Lord Hartington's entertainers were practically Conservatives. This was, like so many of their other statements, utterly false. The names of all who had taken tickets were published, and it was proved that three fourths of those present were Liberal Unionists, and that many more could not procure seats and had to be involuntarily absent.

The great popular demonstration in the same hall on the following evening, as the similar one in favour of Mr. Chamberlain in the preceding year, was not indeed avowedly Liberal Unionist, though the chairman of the association, Mr. Thomas Sinclair, presided. Profiting by experience, the police arrangements were better than they had been at the last demonstration. For admission to the balconies and the platform two-and-sixpence had to be paid by each person. But they were crowded, as well as the body of the hall, with an enthusiastic audience. The National Anthem was sung by some four thousand people, all standing and with their hats off.

As Lord Northbrook, who was present and spoke, said, the scene was most impressive and not to be easily forgotten.

Lord Hartington began by referring to an assertion of Mr. Morley that he had made a recent speech in a spirit of despondency and despair. He was, he said, in the best of spirits, and if he required encouragement to persevere in the cause he came to Ulster to support, it would be given to him by the demonstration he then witnessed. He referred to Mr. Dillon's appeal to the men of the present '88, to his placing them in the same category as the men of '98, the men of '48, and the men of '67, and to the same gentleman's significant intimation that when the struggle for Home Rule was over, the triumphant Nationalists would remember who in Ireland had been their friends and who had been their enemies.

This brought Lord Hartington to the necessity of protecting the minority. Mr. Gladstone was reminded of the pledges he had given when the Franchise Bill and the Redistribution Bill were passed, that the minority would always be safe in the hands of the enormous majority of Protestants in Scotland and England. He was told that if it had then been thought possible he and any Government would concede Home Rule to Ireland, very different Franchise and Redistribution Bills would have been carried. Mr. Gladstone had said emphatically that it was impossible, even beyond the wit of man, to draw a distinction between imperial and domestic questions, so as to

allow the Irish members to vote at Westminster on the one and not on the others. The same great authority now stated that there were twenty different ways of doing this impossible thing. Lord Hartington concluded by referring to the Irish land question, with which Mr. Morley, Lord Spencer, and Mr. Gladstone had all declared an Irish Parliament could not be trusted to deal. He was in favour of carrying out the system of land purchase first recommended by Mr. Bright, and greatly extended by recent legislation, and especially by the Ashbourne Act, which he wished to be renewed, and under which Mr. Dillon had advised the tenants not to purchase. So far from despairing, Lord Hartington stated, in conclusion, that he had every confidence in the ultimate result of the struggle, and that time was fighting on the Unionist side. Lord Northbrook and Mr. Finlay, Q.C., who had accompanied Lord Hartington to Belfast, afterwards spoke. Mr. Finlay produced so favourable an impression that from that time a strong desire was entertained that he should represent an Ulster Unionist constituency.

The next day, Saturday the 20th October, Lord Hartington left Belfast by the Larne and Stranraer route, as Mr. Chamberlain had done in the previous autumn. In his first speech he had said that whether such visits as he had paid to Ulster had done the Ulster Unionists good or not, he was sure that they had done much good to himself and others who, in the cause of the Union, had to address Parliament and the British constituencies. He expressed the

same opinion when bidding some of his Ulster friends good-bye from the paddle-box of the Larne and Stranraer steamer. There can be no doubt whatever that such visits from eminent Unionist public men to Belfast and the North of Ireland as representative Unionists did and are still doing the cause of the Unionists there very much good. Lord Hartington, Mr. Chamberlain, and afterwards Sir Henry James thus knew what Unionist Ulster really was. They could speak of it from their personal experience, from the receptions of which they had been the objects. For the first time, too, at the great public demonstrations in the Ulster Hall, the Conservatives and even Orange working men had the opportunity of listening to Liberal speakers of great authority. They found themselves addressed in earnest but moderate language without any appeals to sectarian prejudices, without any references to the Pope or King William, to Derry or the Boyne. They began to appreciate highly such speeches, and to admire the eminent English Liberal Unionists by whom they were delivered. There were action and reaction. The Orangemen who, in Belfast at least, had still continued to display much independence ever since the great election in the November of 1868, came into line with the Liberal Unionists, and cheered for Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain as enthusiastically as they had ever done for the old Tory leaders.

The change, which may be justly called a revolution, was great. To it, though he was quite unconscious of

the fact, Mr. Gladstone greatly contributed. The year before he had spoken contemptuously of Mr. Chamberlain's visit to Ulster, and had publicly refused to reply to questions which he could not indeed answer. Of Lord Hartington he had, however, at the same time spoken with respect. He tried to make a contrast between the marquis and the member for West Birmingham. This second visit of Lord Hartington to Belfast deeply affected Mr. Gladstone. A few days after it had taken place the Ulster Liberals and the other Unionists who had joined heartily in welcoming Lord Hartington read with much surprise a letter which his old leader had addressed to the Protestant Home Rule Association, Dublin. Mr. Gladstone wrote: "I saw with great astonishment that on the late visit of Lord Hartington to Belfast a number of Protestants assembled to applaud everything that their grandfathers condemned and to condemn everything that their grandfathers applauded. No town was more devoted a century ago to the sentiment of Irish nationality. It may even have pushed that noble sentiment to excess, but now a large part of the inhabitants want to support Lord Hartington, who holds that Irishmen are not entitled to common weal and liberties except on condition of abandoning Irish nationality."[1]

Early in November Mr. Gladstone repeated this expression of opinion with additions. This he did at Birmingham, represented by such Unionist Liberals

[1] Letter from Mr. Gladstone read at the meeting of the Dublin Protestant Home Rule Association, October 27th, 1888.

as Mr. Jesse Collings, Mr. Chamberlain, and Mr. Bright. He accused them as well as the Ulster Liberals of swallowing Toryism bodily. In the answer Mr. Balfour had given to him respecting the case of John Mandeville, who, on his release from prison, said that the treatment had not knocked a feather out of him, Mr. Gladstone stated that he was accused of being a liar. He was, he said, inclined to retort, "You are another." This was sad language from a high-principled statesman in his eightieth year. It seemed as contradictory as the same statesman's present action with his former opinion that at sixty a public man ought to think of retiring from public life; and with the hope he publicly expressed as Chancellor of the Exchequer, when Lord Palmerston was Prime Minister at eighty, that if he reached that age his mind would be intent on higher things. Mr. Gladstone now pledged himself to devote what yet remained of his political life to Irish Home Rule, and not to retire until he had settled that great question.

The most important of his Birmingham speeches was delivered in the Bingley Hall, which was said to be able to accommodate twenty thousand people. He again assailed the Liberal Unionists for being, as he said, not true to the traditions of the Liberal party, though they had continued to be just what he had himself professed to be until two years and ten months before, and just what he was when he paid a former visit to Birmingham eighteen years before. He was quite angry at the announced intention of

what were called the Nonconformist ministers of Ireland to present an address to Lord Hartington and Lord Salisbury, though he welcomed every testimony of approval of his Home Rule policy from the smallest body of Irish Protestants.

Mr. Gladstone's declaration that these Protestant Nonconformists in the North of Ireland were only a handful, and out of court on this Irish question, produced a profound sensation in Ulster. He was told in reply that there were no Nonconformists now in Ireland, that his own Irish Church Act had put an end to Nonconformists in that country because there was now no State Church to conform to or not to conform to, and that it was most absurd to speak of the Irish Protestant clergy, Presbyterians, Methodists, Unitarians, and others, who were nearly all opposed to Home Rule, as a mere handful. In the Irish Presbyterian Church there were more than 600 ministers. They were all known to be against Home Rule, except ten at the most. Then Lord Hartington had asked Mr. Gladstone to say whether, if the Ulster Unionists refused to accept a Home Rule Bill when it became law, he who was now so much opposed to coercion would be prepared to use the forces of the Crown to compel them to submission. This was a direct question, but Mr. Gladstone did not give it even an indirect answer. He who again spoke of Mitchelstown, and had during the session, and in speeches during the autumn, done all he could to encourage the Nationalists of the Land League and the Plan of Campaign in their proceedings, which were judicially declared to be illegal,

charged Lord Hartington with encouraging the Ulster Unionists to resistance. Yet he had actually, as we have just seen, accused the same Ulster Unionists, many of whom had been his own supporters, of having degenerated from their grandfathers, who were members of what became a rebellious confederacy, that of United Ireland. More unjustifiable and reckless statements, it is painful to say, were never made. That they should be made by a veteran statesman who had filled so many offices under the Crown, who had been a member of Parliament for fifty-six years, and who had then been three times Prime Minister of the Queen, seemed almost incredible. In Ulster they had the effect of extinguishing in the minds of the old Liberals any lingering feeling they had had in Mr. Gladstone's favour.

They asked one another what they had done to be accused by Mr. Gladstone of having degenerated from their grandfathers. From the time he had begun his series of Irish reforms they had loyally supported him in his remedial policy. Belfast had even returned a member in favour of the disestablishment of the Irish Church. Every Ulster Liberal member had voted for the Irish Land Acts and the Ballot Act; they had stood by what was Mr. Gladstone's avowed policy at the general election, not then three years ago, and had been defeated in his cause by his new allies. Yet they were plainly told that they had degenerated from their grandfathers, merely because they had not become converts to Irish Nationalism, which Mr. Gladstone himself had only adopted in his

seventy-seventh year, after having been more than fifty-three years a member of the House of Commons. The Presbyterian tenant farmers of Ulster, who a few years before were ready to give the Liberal leader such an enthusiastic reception, but who were nearly all with their clergy Unionists, and many of them Liberal Unionists, could scarcely believe Mr. Gladstone to be the man they had loyally supported, and whom they had regarded with a feeling, as was said, next to idolatry. Even if all their grandfathers had been rebels in 1798, as some of them were, this was no reason for them being rebels, or for them joining the Land League or the Plan of Campaign in 1888, when all the great reforms for which their fathers and grandfathers contended had been carried. The Ulster Liberals found themselves now denounced by Mr. Gladstone, whom they had revered, just as they had been by O'Connell, whom Mr. Gladstone himself had never supported, and whom a Government of which he was a member had prosecuted and imprisoned.[1]

[1] It may not be out of place to repeat here that O'Connell was often at war with the Ulster Liberals and the newspaper which he regarded as their more prominent organ. I have referred to him as saying that the Belfast Liberals were hypocrites. He had much dislike to the Presbyterians generally, whom he accused of encouraging the rebellion of 1798, and then of after its failure becoming Orangemen. Further on in the speech already quoted, he said that "the Presbyterians of the North laid the foundation of the secret society which produced the rebellion of 1798. That disastrous revolt originated with the worthy Liberals of Belfast. They allured some of the Catholics from the paths of duty, and when they made offenders of them they were the first not only to abandon the dupes of their own artifices but to enter the ranks

The address of the Irish Non-Episcopal ministers was presented to Lord Hartington and the Marquis of Salisbury a few days after Mr. Gladstone had returned from the Midlands. It was a remarkable document in condemnation of Irish Home Rule, signed by 864 out of the 999 Protestant Nonconformist clergy, as the Prime Minister called them, in Ireland. It was truly said that those who did not sign could not, except a very small number indeed, be represented as in favour of Home Rule. Many of them thought that they would be going out of their way in signing any political document. But would any statesman before Mr. Gladstone, have publicly called 864 Irish Presbyterian clergymen out of 999 a mere handful, and out of court on an Irish question which especially concerned them and their congregations as Protestants and as British citizens? This was the question asked in Ulster, with respect to Mr. Gladstone's language as applied to those whom he represented as Nonconformists in Ireland. He would never, it was said, have thought of using such words to the same clergymen in Ireland, or a similar number or any number in England, expressing approval of his Home Rule policy.

Thus did the great statesman show again his

of the Orangemen. Yes, the identical Northern Liberals who first stimulated to rebellion, were also when the hope of success faded the very foremost in the Orange ranks."—*O'Connell Speeches*, edited by his son, vol. ii. pp. 451–453. This was not just. But the prospect of Catholic Emancipation undoubtedly caused many Ulster Presbyterians to become Conservatives.

inconsistency. Immediately afterwards he also, with similar inconsistency, surprised the Ulster tenant farmers and their advocates who had supported his Irish Land Acts, and who had become, as he had declared himself to be, strongly in favour of Irish land purchase, which afforded the only permanent solution of the problem raised by the now legalised dual ownership.

The first Ashbourne Act, carried in the summer of 1885, when Lord Salisbury was Prime Minister, was, as has already been said, founded on a Bill introduced by Sir George Trevelyan in the preceding year. Sir George, as the then Irish Chief Secretary, proposed to advance twenty millions for Irish land purchase. The Ashbourne Act advanced five millions. The only objection at the time raised to it on the part of Mr. Gladstone's late Attorney General, Mr. Walker, and Mr. Sexton, since 1886 representing Belfast, was that the amount was too small. An amendment was placed on the paper for increasing the advance to twenty millions. Mr. Gladstone himself raised no objection. The State by this measure, differing from the former Acts of 1870 and 1881, proposed to advance all the purchase money to the tenants, while, however, retaining one fifth from the landlords as a guarantee to the Treasury against any possible loss. This provision was substituted for a Local Guarantee Bill, which Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues had not had time to pass in the former year. The Act had been the most successful of all the Land Purchase Acts. The five millions were exhausted and proposals for advances to nearly another

million had been made. Hence the Government, in the second or autumnal part of the session of 1888, introduced the Land Purchase Continuance Bill, or second Ashbourne Act. Mr. Balfour was absent through indisposition; but the Irish Solicitor-General, Mr., now Mr. Justice, Madden, well performed the task. Mr. Gladstone himself proposed an amendment, declaring that instead of such a Bill, a measure allowing the Land Court to cancel arrears of rent, as well as to deal with rents themselves, should be substituted. It was objected that this was proposing something essentially different and with which this second Ashbourne Bill had nothing whatever to do. The debate was continued for several nights, the Liberal Opposition and the Irish Nationalists acting together to oppose that land purchase which hitherto they had so much professed to favour.

Mr. Gladstone's amendment was defeated by the ministerial majority of eighty-four. The Opposition, this time represented especially by Mr. Labouchere as the mover, resisted the second reading, and were defeated by seventy-five. As this was an apparent diminution of nine from the former division on Mr. Gladstone's amendment, the Opposition cheered and thought they had gained a victory. In Ulster this contest was watched with much interest. Resolutions in favour of the Bill were passed by the Ulster Liberal Executive Committee, and the Route Tenant Right Association in Antrim, the county of Antrim being, as stated, the very centre of the old tenant right agitation, and now strongly in favour of land

purchase with State aid. It was said with indignation that the real reason of the change of policy on this question by the Home Rule Liberal leader and the Irish Nationalists was that the purchasing tenants invariably closed their ears to the seductions of the Land League, and were deaf to any advice given by Nationalist members to repudiate the obligations they had contracted to the State. The Bill was successfully pushed forward. As it consisted only of a single clause, it could not be persistently obstructed in committee. It was, however, announced by Nationalist members that Parliament should not be prorogued before the Christmas holidays. It did actually sit until Christmas Eve.

In the Queen's Speech at the prorogation that afternoon not one word was said about Ireland. No credit was taken for the success which had attended the administration of the Crimes Act: the offences against which it had been directed were, however, diminishing to a fourth. This, too, notwithstanding the encouragement to resistance given by the Opposition and even by Mr. Gladstone himself in his speeches during the autumn. He afterwards went to Naples for the Christmas holidays. It was rumoured that he was likely to spend some time with Lord Dufferin at the British Embassy in Rome, and that he had not abandoned the hope of gaining over to the Home Rule cause the ablest, the most experienced, and the most accomplished of Ulster noblemen.

Lord Dufferin was just returning from the Indian viceroyalty. On the day he landed at Naples he

met Mr. Gladstone in the streets. As he was standing looking into a shop window, the veteran leader of the Home Rule Opposition found himself tapped on the shoulder by the retired Indian Viceroy. It was a surprise to many of his Ulster friends that Lord Dufferin did not stay out the usual time of five years. But he said himself that he had gone to India as Viceroy at a later period of life than nearly all his predecessors. His Indian administration had been thoroughly successful. He had had to put right some of the errors of Lord Ripon; he had added Upper Burmah to our Imperial dominions, and, as he stated just before his departure, he left India without a cloud.

It was during Lord Dufferin's absence in the East that Mr. Gladstone had suddenly adopted his Home Rule policy. On this question Lord Dufferin had not publicly spoken until just at the close of his Indian viceroyalty. His Ulster friends, however, never doubted what his opinions, what indeed his most decided convictions, were. They learnt therefore with delight that in the speech he delivered in Calcutta on St. Andrew's day, just before departing for Europe, he declared himself strongly against fostering any aspirations for an Indian nationality, which, as in Ireland, could scarcely be said to have ever had an existence. In India there were Hindoos and there were Mohammedans, just as in Ireland there were Protestants and Catholics, and also in very much the same proportions. Neither country could be regarded as homogeneous, as having that com-

munity of sentiment, of beliefs, of interests, and of aspirations which must form the basis of all national life, and without which there could be no satisfactory native government. There the rule of the majority over the minority, as in the circumstances of Ireland, would become an intolerable tyranny.

The sentiments this speech expressed had, and were evidently intended to have, a reflex action on Ireland and the Irish problem. It was said that in the great crisis of the struggle which might be approaching Lord Dufferin, with his unrivalled tact, knowledge, and experience, would not desert the Ulster Unionists, by whom he was honoured and beloved, and that in the worst extremity, if the occasion presented itself, he would be prepared to put himself at their head. These might not be found idle words.

CHAPTER XII

1889—1890

Session of 1889—Mr. Morley's Amendment—His Quotation of an Ulster Article—Attacks on Mr. Balfour—The Light Railways—Retirement of Lord Londonderry from the Irish Lord Lieutenancy—Another Banquet to Lord Dufferin in Belfast—Who is an Irishman?—Mr. Balfour and an Irish Catholic University—Indignation and Threats of the Orangemen—"Mr. Balfour's chop"—Golf in Ireland—Steady Success of the Cause of Law and Order under Mr. Balfour's Chief Secretaryship.

AFTER the short recess of less than two months, Parliament met again for business on the 21st of February, 1889. On the first day of the session Lord Dufferin, as the newly-created Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, was introduced to the House of Lords by the Prime Minister, and by the marquis's predecessor in the Indian viceroyalty, Lord Ripon. In the Queen's Speech credit was justly taken for the improved state of Ireland, consequent on its year and a half's administration under unprecedented circumstances. In both Houses of Parliament it was said that this was the first time a great party had set itself to encourage deliberate and systematic defiance of the law. Before the prorogation it had, however, been stated, as in the previous year, that the session

was not to be Irish; that as the last had been especially devoted to English affairs, so the new one was to be especially concerned with Scotch; that as England and Wales had now a Local Government Act, a similar measure was to be passed for Scotland. Measures indeed were promised for improving the material resources in Ireland, and amending the constitutions of the various tribunals which had special jurisdiction over real property. It had been mentioned before the prorogation while the second Ashbourne Act was under discussion, that the Government intended bringing in a more comprehensive measure of Irish land purchase. This hope was not at that time realised.

Though the session was, as has been said, not to be an Irish one, it began by a thoroughly Irish debate. Mr. Morley himself came forward as the mover of the amendment to the Address, virtually censuring the Government for the manner in which the Crimes Act was in some cases being administered, not of course by Mr. Balfour but by some of his subordinates. Several of Mr. Morley's observations could not, at least by me, be disputed. Mr. Morley, in the course of his speeches, did me the honour of quoting at great length an article I had written a few days before on the needless irritation caused by some of the officials engaged in the assertion of law and order through the rough-and-ready methods adopted in making arrests by the Irish police, and on the discredit thus thrown on a Unionist Government. Mr. Morley's extracts from the article were cheered by the opponents of the Ministry in the House

of Commons and especially by the Irish Nationalist members. But what was read by the late Irish Chief Secretary against the then occupant of the same office was, as acknowledged, not written in any spirit of hostility to the Government, and least of all against Mr. Balfour, whom it was a pleasure to defend, as I had done his official predecessors, Mr. Forster, Lord Spencer, Sir George Trevelyan, and Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, who had been almost as much misrepresented, abused, and held up to public obloquy as Mr. Balfour then was, and by many of the same assailants.

When the Irish Chief Secretary rose to reply to Mr. Morley's indictment he was met by cries of "Pigott." Mr. Balfour had had nothing to do with the wretched forger who had just absconded the night before his cross-examination by Sir Charles Russell was to be resumed. That crime in Ireland, against which the so-called Coercion Act had been directed, was much diminished, and was diminishing, was admitted by the statistics to which Mr. Morley had himself referred. In this respect Mr. Balfour was being triumphantly successful. But the arrest of an Irish Nationalist member of Parliament on the morning of the polling day of a Scotch election, and the attempted arrest of Father M'Fadden as he was leaving his chapel, were great blunders, for neither of which Mr. Balfour was himself responsible. He was, however, accused of cynical brutality and indecent levity. He was interrupted in his speech by ironical cheers and jeers in a manner almost unexampled. Sir George Trevelyan and Mr. Glad-

stone himself were not more generous to the Irish Chief Secretary than the extreme Irish Nationalists. The Opposition of all sections made a common cause. Among them there was no candour, no justice, no fair play. The amendment after a five-nights' debate was defeated by a majority of seventy-nine.

The Bill which the Chief Secretary succeeded during the session in carrying for the promotion of light railways in the congested districts was very valuable. It has had very desirable results. Those railways have greatly improved the communications in the West of Ireland, where fish and even agricultural produce were left to rot on the ground because there were no expeditious means of conveying them to the various markets in other parts of Ireland and to England and Scotland. The session, however, was, as it had been promised to be, principally a Scotch one.

The day after the prorogation the Marquis of Londonderry ceased to be Lord Lieutenant. He and the Irish Chief Secretary had worked together with the utmost harmony. During his tenure of office, though intimately connected with Ireland, Lord Londonderry had escaped much of the abuse to which Mr. Balfour had been subjected. He was generally spoken of and treated with respect. It was Mr. Balfour who had to bear the burden and heat of the day, and especially the burden and heat of the abuse. Yet Lord Londonderry was regarded as an Ulster nobleman and was a large landlord in County Down. The bitterness of the invectives against Mr. Balfour, even Mr. Gladstone having stooped to compare him

with the Neapolitan tyrant Bomba, acted as a kind of protection to the Lord Lieutenant. It was on the Irish Chief Secretary's devoted head that all the Nationalist wrath was poured. As so directed, Lord Londonderry escaped. It is but just to say that the Marquis of Londonderry was developing powers of which he showed little evidence of possessing when he was first returned as a member for Down, eleven years before this time. He then said very little and that little not very well. He has since said a great deal, and has said it very well. He divides his year very fairly between England and Ireland. He and his family generally reside at Mountstewart a considerable time in the winter. It is not uncommon, indeed, to find him bring his large establishment over from the county of Durham twice and sometimes thrice a year. Tenant right, long before it was legalised, was always respected on the Londonderry estate, and recently the marquis has shown by a very practical example that he is disposed to encourage the tenants in purchasing their farms with the money provided by the State. It needs scarcely be said that at this time and at all times the Marchioness of Londonderry has been a most graceful and effective helpmeet to her noble husband as a hostess at Mountstewart, and wherever her presence has been required for any work of benevolence.

Immediately afterwards, in September, Lord Dufferin was entertained again at a banquet in Belfast. This was the fifth of these public compliments he had received in the town with which he was especially

connected. The Dufferin estate and the Londonderry estate in Down are in close proximity. Both Lord Dufferin and Lord Londonderry have there the same friends and neighbours. The warmth of Lord Dufferin's reception was not diminished, it was intensified, by the speech he had delivered in Calcutta on St. Andrew's day. In his reception there was no political distinction. The Conservatives were now as enthusiastic in their admiration of him as the Liberals had been when he went and when he returned from Canada. On his return then he had been appointed Ambassador at St. Petersburg just as he had accepted an invitation from the Reform Club to dinner. He mentioned that fact to Lord Beaconsfield, and received the characteristic reply: "My dear Dufferin, I do not care where you dine." Being on a six-months' holiday from Rome, he had been presented with the freedom of the city of London. At the dinner that evening he delivered an interesting speech of a decidedly imperial character. But Lord Dufferin was suffering from indisposition, which in the September at Belfast he had quite shaken off.

Then he scarcely ever spoke better. The principal portion of his speech referred to the many eminent Ulster men who had in one way or another taken part in the government of the British Empire, and more particularly in the administration of India. "Though," said Lord Dufferin, "my labours and difficulties can in no sense be compared with theirs, yet to be allowed through the indulgence of my fellow countrymen to accept a humble niche in the temple of

honour which enshrines the memory of the Lawrences, the Montgomerys, the Nicholsons, the Gillespies, and many another North of Ireland hero, would, indeed, be ample reward." He paid a graceful compliment to his successor in India, as a Kerry nobleman, the Marquis of Lansdowne; to a Bourke of Mayo, Lord Connemara, governor of Madras; to Sir Frederick Roberts, as he then was, a Waterford hero, the victor of Candahar; to Sir George White, an Antrim man, who had also shown great military ability, now Commander-in-Chief of India, and to Sir David Barbour, a distinguished Indian financier, who was from the county of Tyrone, and had been educated at the Belfast Queen's College. Lord Dufferin also observed: "To do credit to Ireland, and to prove myself not unworthy of the native strain from which I am descended, has been the constant object of my ambition."

The speech was much applauded on its delivery, and much commented on in the course of the following week. Lord Dufferin was told by some London Home Rule and Irish Nationalist newspapers that he made a great mistake; that he and the other eminent men whom he had mentioned were not Irishmen at all; that they did not belong to the Celtic race, and that all genuine Irishmen were Celts.

This produced an amusing controversy. It was retorted that there were other Celts besides Irishmen, that there were Scotch Celts, who had had a great deal to do with the North of Ireland. One newspaper, however, replied that Edmund Burke could not be regarded as an Irishman, because he was descended

from the De Burghs, who were Englishmen; that Lord Dufferin, who was descended from Sheridan, whose ancestors were said to have been kings in Ireland, was in a similar position to Burke, and, like him, did not know what he was talking about when he spoke of himself as an Irishman. It was asked again in reply, "How could the De Burghs be called Englishmen? They were Normans, and when they came over to Ireland, the English nation, as it afterwards became, was not even formed. Cromwell's troops who settled in Tipperary became more Irish than the original Irish, and even in Cork, which prides itself on being intensely National, no person can fail to notice in a large number of the people their dark-blooded Spanish descent."

The Home Rule question was leading some of those most in favour of Mr. Gladstone's new Irish policy to strange conclusions. Lord Dufferin had spoken of himself in three capacities, as a colonial governor, a diplomatic representative, and as an Indian ruler. As an official no statesman had or has ever had so large a personal experience of the British Empire. In the Ulster Hall of Belfast on the evening of the banquet there was run round the hall, just below the balconies, a series of embroidered inscriptions of the various lands in which he had distinguished himself in one way or another, and generally as a representative of his Sovereign. The following was the roll of names emblazoned on the band of scarlet cloth stretching round the large hall: "Vienna, 1855." "High Latitudes, 1859." "Syria, 1860." "India

Office, 1864–1866." "War Office, 1866–1867." "Duchy of Lancaster, 1868–1872." "Canada, 1872–1878." "St. Petersburg, 1879–1881." "Constantinople, 1881–1884." "Egypt, 1882–1883." "India, 1884–1888." "Rome." This list of suggestive names was very imposing. It showed Lord Dufferin's official career in so many lands to have been almost unique. To him of all public men the poet's words could be most justly applied :

> Much have I seen and known ; cities of men
> And manners, climates, councils, governments,
> Myself not least, but honoured of them all.

Yet some Home Rulers, as will be afterwards seen, thought, as has been said, that he ought to have always remained in Ireland as an Irish patriot.

Soon after this banquet to Lord Dufferin in Belfast, a strong feeling was roused against Mr. Balfour by the report that he had undertaken to set up and endow out of the public funds a Catholic University. On the last day of the session, in reply to Mr. Sexton, the Chief Secretary acknowledged that the Irish Catholics had something to complain of with respect to higher education, and said that it was possible to devise some scheme, though he declined then saying what it ought to be, to satisfy all their legitimate aspirations.

Some of the Orange leaders took the alarm. They declared in their usually strong language, that if the Irish Chief Secretary had such an intention, it would be their duty to do all they could to turn him and

his Government out. The Orangemen in the Conservative Club at Manchester, and many of the Brethren in Belfast and the North of Ireland, made common cause against the Unionist and Conservative Irish Chief Secretary. The English Radicals declared themselves equally hostile. Mr. Healy, himself a Catholic, and of course a Nationalist, was reported as having said on the 24th of September, at a meeting of the National League, that Mr. Balfour ought to have been encouraged to bring forward his plan for the establishment of a Catholic University, and thus, when it had been put into the form of a Bill, and the Government committed to it, lured into an ambuscade. This is still a warning.

In two letters from the Bass Rock Hotel, North Berwick, the Irish Chief Secretary stated that he never intended setting up a Catholic University. This repudiation, in a speech in reply to an address on his golden wedding, Mr. Gladstone declared to be shabby. What Mr. Balfour's plan was has never yet become known. That he has one, and that he may some day bring it forward, is not unlikely. Sir M. Hicks-Beach, his predecessor, had, it was stated, had a Bill ready on the subject. The Catholics have a grievance with respect to Irish university education admitted by successive Governments. After having attempted to remove it, during his visit to Ireland and afterwards, Mr. Gladstone himself acknowledged that on this question there was a grievance. It was scarcely fair therefore in him to turn round with respect to it on Mr. Balfour. Indirectly an effort in a very clumsy manner has

been made to meet the difficulty by allowing the Professors in the Catholic College in Stephen's Green to receive salaries as Fellows of the Royal University. This arrangement had the acquiescence, and even the support, of the Rev. Dr. Porter, the late President of the Queen's College, Belfast, and the son-in-law of the very strong Tory and Presbyterian divine Dr. Cooke. It was some time before this outcry against Mr. Balfour as a denominationalist died away in Manchester, where he was one of the representatives, and in the North of Ireland, where among the Unionists the courage with which he had administered the Crimes Act was so much admired.

When the outcry was at its loudest, I happened to be on an autumn holiday in the South of Ireland. In Cork there was great excitement: Mr. William O'Brien, M.P., was again in prison. The Chief Secretary had been requested to use his influence with the Prisons Board to relax some of the rules in Mr. O'Brien's favour. It was said that he had consented to allow Mr. O'Brien a chop for breakfast. At this the municipal authorities of Cork and other public boards of the city were deeply agitated. "Mr. Balfour's chop" was the subject of debates, resolutions, and leading articles. Mr. O'Brien, after being defeated by Mr. T. W. Russell in South Tyrone, had in 1886 been returned for East Cork. He was called by Aldermen and Councillors of the city which was proud of being termed rebel "our illustrious representative." To such an illustrious representative Mr. Balfour's chop was represented as an insult. The

patriotic cry was "Do not eat Mr. Balfour's chop." And this was considered politics.

In Mr. O'Brien's paper, *United Ireland*, not only was Mr. Balfour still called the Base, the Brutal and the Bloody, but now also the Golfour. This was the latest attempt at wit. In the North of Ireland, however, there can be no doubt that these attacks on the Chief Secretary as a "Golfour" did much to popularise the game. One of the first of the Irish golf clubs was established in Belfast by Mr. Thomas Sinclair. Mr. Balfour, while on a private visit to Lord Londonderry at Mountstewart, was prevailed upon to play a game of golf on the new club grounds at Holywood, some four miles from Belfast. On that occasion he was beaten, but, as all golfers will understand, he was at a great disadvantage by not knowing the course and not having his own clubs.

Golf was with him and still is but a relaxation. He continued resolutely to administer the Crimes Act. Notwithstanding that Mr. Gladstone himself and some of his recent colleagues had gone so far as to encourage those who had violated the law, and to denounce the Irish Chief Secretary in such an unprecedented manner, slowly but surely the cause of law and order was gaining ground. When the year 1889 ended, Mr. Balfour could boast, and did boast, that the battle was no longer a drawn one, that not only had the progress of lawlessness been checked but beaten back. The forces of disorder, notwithstanding their loud shouts of defiance, were retreating all along the line.

CHAPTER XIII

1890—1892

The Judicial Commission — Professor Tyndall — Effect of the Report of the Judicial Commission — Mr. Balfour's Land Purchase Bill—Death of Sir E. P. Cowan—The Land League and New Tipperary—Partial Failure of the Potato Crop—An Autumn Visit to Donegal — The Messrs. Musgrave—Mr. Balfour and his Sister in Donegal—The Quarrel among the Nationalists—Dr. Parker and the Catholic Bill—Sir Henry James in Belfast—Mr. Parnell in Belfast—Two Vacant Seats in Ulster—A Marriage and a Death—Two Great and Memorable Changes.

THE commission of judges investigating the criminal proceedings of the Irish Nationalists had continued to sit throughout the year. The forgeries of the Parnellite letters had indeed been thoroughly exposed, and the wretched forger himself, not a Unionist but a Nationalist, a fact which is sometimes overlooked, had died by his own hand. But very damaging evidence had been given against many of the Irish Nationalist members of Parliament, and the report of the judges early in the new year 1890 was anxiously awaited. Captain O'Shea had appeared in the witness-box. It was noticed that the eminent counsel for the defence, the able Irishman, the genial and true-hearted

Sir Charles Russell, had scarcely cross-examined the witness at all, and appeared to address him with bated breath. It was at first whispered that the *Times* had induced Captain O'Shea to threaten to bring an action for divorce, with Mr. Parnell as co-respondent. Some of Mr. Gladstone's followers indignantly asked, "Could anything be more malicious?" Mr. Parnell afterwards encouraged this rumour, with the addition that the principal members of the Government had also used influence with Captain O'Shea to begin the action. As it was, neither the *Times* nor the Government, as in fairness must be admitted, had anything to do with that business.

In the January before the meeting of Parliament the Special Commission continued to be denounced by the Opposition. Mr. Gladstone, it was said, was in splendid form, and intended leading the attack on the three judges and the Government. On the other hand, the Unionists in the North of Ireland warmly greeted the new Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Zetland, when he came to Belfast from Lord Londonderry's, and the marquis himself received an enthusiastic welcome at a great meeting in the Ulster Hall, when Professor Tyndall delivered a very able address, which induced Sir William Harcourt to call him a scientific Orangeman. The professor was not an Orangeman but a Liberal Unionist. He was afterwards entertained at a luncheon by the Liberal Unionists in the Ulster Reform Club, and replied to the speech of the chairman, Sir Edward Cowan, with great vigour and effect. As the friend of Carlyle, Tyndall told an

anecdote which greatly amused his entertainers, and was accepted as very characteristic. Mr. Carlyle was asked what the effect in his opinion would be of granting an Irish Parliament. "It would be," he said, "like cutting a mansion into two, and opening the back parlour to all the burglars in the world."

The report of the Special Commission, produced three days after Parliament met on the 11th February, went far to confirm this opinion of the Chelsea Sage. Some thirty-five Irish Nationalist members of Parliament were declared to be guilty of practices of a highly censurable character. Mr. Parnell was acquitted indeed of the charge brought against him with respect to the Pigott letters: that charge had been entirely disproved. He and other Nationalist members too were stated not to have sought to produce absolute separation between Great Britain and Ireland. But enough surely remained of condemnation in the report to the effect that, in the opinion of the three judges, the accused members were active agents in a criminal conspiracy. Never before had members of Parliament been judicially pronounced guilty of such conduct. Nationalist members themselves and the Home Rule Opposition maintained stoutly that the report was a virtual acquittal. No person would now assert anything of the kind. The report is acknowledged to have been most damaging. In Ulster it produced an effect which has never since been done away with. This was to deepen the dislike almost to detestation of the men who would become masters of Ireland under a National Parliament and Government,

and to increase the determination of all the loyal and Unionist classes never to have anything to do with such a Parliament and such a Government. This was the firm, the unanimous resolve both of the Conservatives and the Liberal Unionists.

As he showed at the beginning of the session, Mr. Gladstone continued to be a passionate believer in Mr. Parnell. Sir William Harcourt, before the debate on the Address was entered upon, moved that the publication of the first letter was a false and scandalous libel, and a breach of the privileges of the House. This proposal Mr. Gladstone and the Opposition generally supported with very strong language. It was scarcely, however, either generous or liberal to associate the publication of the letter with the old question of privilege as asserted against the freedom of the press. Sir William Harcourt's motion was defeated by a majority of fifty-eight. But the question was revived again and again in the debates on the Address, and afterwards when the report of the Commission was printed. The result was that it was not until the 24th of March that Mr. Balfour was able to introduce his Land Purchase Bill, which had been promised at the close of the former session, and of which great expectations had been formed among the Irish tenant farmers. It involved the advance of some thirty more millions for making the occupiers owners of their farms in Ireland, and with the same object the employment of other ten millions already advanced when the repayment of the instalments came in. Mr. Gladstone, who, as he admitted, had com-

mitted himself and his Government to a very much larger employment of State money with this object in 1886 as a supplement to his Home Rule Bill, now continued to speak very hesitatingly on the subject. All he had said at the earlier time was well remembered by the Ulster tenant farmers. They could not understand the change of attitude he had adopted as the measure was pushed forward.

The land purchase plan was only part of the measure as it was introduced. It also proposed to constitute a Land Department out of the five different sets of officials engaged in dealing with Irish land, and a Board for dealing with the congested districts through a guarantee fund of a million and a half. Some reasonable objection was raised to putting two if not three different subjects in the same Bill. It became, however, evident, as the debate on the second reading began, that the Opposition were fully determined, if they could prevent it, the measure should not become law during the session. Mr. Parnell himself was the man who moved that the Bill should be read a second time that day six months. He was supported by Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Morley, and the united forces of the Irish Nationalists and the Home Rule Liberals. It was described as a landlords' Bill, and as risking nearly fifty millions of public money without any security that it would be repaid. The Bill was read, however, a second time before the Easter holidays by a majority of eighty. The Budget, the licensing question, and other contentious subjects, with the exercise of all the obstructive powers of the Opposition,

did prevent the measure from becoming law before the prorogation of Parliament. It did not reach the committee stage before the termination of the session. The ministers, however, pledged themselves to reintroduce the Bill when the two Houses met again for a new session in November. With this promise the Ulster tenant farmers, who were so favourable to land purchase, had to be satisfied. Their objection to the Bill, as Mr. Morley justly stated before the close of the session, was that it did not go far enough. They wished for a general system of compulsory purchase.

The Bill ultimately became law. Mr. Balfour redeemed his pledge. To meet Mr. Gladstone's anxiety to protect the public purse, the measure became too complicated. It had too many guarantees, too many provisions. The landlords have certainly never regarded it as a boon to them: the fifth portion of the purchase money which they had to deposit, and the stock which they were expected to accept on terms thought to be inferior to those of other public funds, seriously interfered with the expeditious and satisfactory working of the Act. Had Mr. Balfour been permitted to have his own way, had he not made concessions to buy off Mr. Gladstone's opposition and accepted amendments which were really intended to impede the operation of the measure, it would have been a much better one.

The day on which it was introduced and read a first time was a sad one to the Liberal Unionists in the North of Ireland. Sir Edward Cowan, who had presided with so much ability and success at the

luncheon to Professor Tyndall two months before, died of typhoid fever at Craigavad, the place where he had hospitably entertained so many distinguished Liberal representatives of the Unionist cause. His loss to the party was great. I cannot recall it without the deepest sorrow. For more than twenty years he was a friend and adviser on many difficult questions as they arose. His judgment was unerring. His tact unfailing. He showed remarkable political growth, and his last public utterance was one of his best.

From the beginning of March until the autumn, Messrs. Dillon and O'Brien continued the work of the Land League. The report of the Commission had not acted upon them as a restraint. The Ponsonby estate in Cork had become almost a wilderness. Mr. Smith-Barry, himself a good landlord, for going to the assistance of his brother landlords who lived in another county, had his tenants set against him as if he had been the worst of rack-renters. A new Tipperary under Mr. O'Brien's advice had been created, but all who visited it from the North of Ireland during the summer and autumn, however extreme might be their views on the land question, came back with accounts of the whole business being a most egregious folly. Messrs. Dillon and O'Brien were once more arrested, it was asserted by the Nationalists, because Mr. Balfour, who as he said himself was represented as a kind of Jack the Ripper, was anxious to prevent them going to America to collect more money for the sufferers by the failure of

the potato crop. They did go to America, but it was after they had, when on bail, fled to France.

That there was a partial failure of the potato crop was undeniable. It was not, however, anything like so serious as for party objects it was represented. I spent part of my holiday in Donegal during the month of September. With the report of severe distress, and the painful memory of the tragedy at Gweedore, where the inspector of police had been so brutally murdered at the door of the Rev. Father M'Fadden's house, just after the reverend gentleman had left the chapel where he had performed divine service, I was surprised at the apparent content and kindly nature of the peasantry. When I entered the village of Carrick with my host Mr. Musgrave, the Chairman of the Harbour Board of Belfast, the peasantry met us with the most respectful courtesy. Everywhere it was the same. I was the friend of the landlord, and that was enough.

The Messrs. Musgrave were iron merchants in Belfast. They were acquainted with Mr. Chamberlain, who had had with them business relations. Having purchased the Conolly estate in Donegal, they set to work to develop it with the money they had acquired in commercial pursuits. They were Liberals, and descendants of Liberals who were connected in the earlier time of the French Revolution with the United Irishmen so long as they were professedly constitutional and moderate. The Messrs. Musgrave were now Liberal Unionists such as Mr. Gladstone had so recently and persistently denounced, though they

continued, like other Liberal Unionists in Ulster, the whole Ulster Liberal party in fact, to be just what they were when they were among his enthusiastic supporters. The village of Carrick was their own. It was full of those industries for which the Duchess of Abercorn had just published a graceful appeal. On seeing the peasants working at their embroidery about their doors and in the open fields, for such was and is the practice in the fine weather, the verses of Shakspere might be recalled about the "Spinsters and knitters in the sun."

Here there was no trace of the Land League, of boycotting, of moonlighting, of brutal and cowardly murder. Everywhere there seemed to be peace and content. I congratulated the Messrs. Musgrave on the good feeling which seemed to exist among the people, whose good they sought to promote. "The people here," was the reply, "would behave well enough if they were let alone." Though the Nationalists were making so much of the failure of the potato crop, in the places I visited in Donegal little evidence of the alleged failure was forthcoming. On being questioned about it, the peasantry were reticent and shy. There was a failure of the potato crop, they said: it seemed a point of honour to maintain that there was; but they were not ready to set to work to dig up potatoes and expose them in all their convincing blackness.

In other respects they were most obliging. When their landlords wanted lobsters, one of the men pushed down a boat into the sea, and held on to it as the water was up to his neck, shouting "No

skids!" Skids were the long pieces of wood laid parallel to one another down to a launching stage to prevent the descent of a boat being too precipitate. My friends promised to provide new skids, and they were afterwards provided. Much of the cultivation was carried on according to what was called the rundale system. A tenant had one field in one place, and another in another, with intervening fields belonging to his neighbours. One field of the same man might be on a low level, another on the top of a hill, whither he had to carry manure and other agricultural necessaries on his back. This was very laborious and very slow. The Messrs. Musgrave had done much to change this wasteful system; but the peasantry clung to it and were not easily induced to give it up, even when offered great advantages.

Very shortly after this autumn visit, Mr. Balfour passed over the same ground and saw the same scenes. He went even much further. He had been somewhat injudiciously taunted with neglecting the scene of his Irish duties for golfing in Scotland. But he soon silenced his assailants on this subject. It is well known that he and his sister in a somewhat inclement November visited the congested districts, and especially where it was thought the light railways were most required. In Carrick he stayed at the hotel the Messrs. Musgrave had built, a hotel which then afforded a striking contrast to many in Donegal and in other parts of Ireland, whither the tourists ought to be especially attracted. So anxious was Mr. Balfour to promote the light railways, that

in Donegal he made promises in which his successor in the Irish Chief Secretaryship, the then Financial Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Jackson, was, it was said, not disposed to concur.

Mr. Balfour, who had been held up to public obloquy as a ruthless oppressor, was nearly everywhere respectfully received in the South and West. His personal sympathy acted like a charm on the poor people, and even on many of the priests. His sister, too, was received as such a lady deserved to be.

From Donegal the Irish Chief Secretary took back with him a cold which even interfered with his Parliamentary duties when the session began on the 24th November.

The situation had, however, utterly changed. The judgment in the O'Shea and Parnell divorce case had led to the deliberations in Committee Room No. 15, and their conclusion was waited for with the keenest interest. In the Queen's Speech it was again said that the state of Ireland had improved, and it was intimated that if the progress of other measures admitted it, a County Government Bill for that country might be introduced in the course of the session. The Irish Land Purchase Bill made satisfactory progress before the adjournment over Christmas. All heart was for the time taken out of the Opposition. They who had been calling out so loudly for a dissolution now said nothing at all on the subject. Mr. Gladstone, who had so long stood by Mr. Parnell, was anxious to get rid of him as a Nationalist leader. He was reported to have said, "If Parnell does not go, I must."

The Nonconformist conscience was reported to be thoroughly roused. But it is not at all necessary to enter into details of matters which did not affect Ulster, except in a very indirect manner, and which were there generally regarded with the most impartial indifference.

Late in December, however, in acknowledging some resolutions from an Orange lodge in Belfast, Mr. Gladstone again expressed the hope that the Belfast Protestants would return to the enlightened principles of their forefathers a century ago. He wrote to Mr. Samuel Criglington, the District Secretary of No. 9 Loyal Orange Lodge, who had scarcely expected the honour of such a correspondent: "I cannot altogether abandon the hope that those Belfast Protestants who are now opposed to Home Rule will yet happily approximate to the ideas and convictions which possessed their fathers a hundred years ago."

In this assumption, as has been already so often repeated, there was a great fallacy. In a reply to his letter Mr. Gladstone was reminded that Lord Charlemont, the head of the Volunteers, was not, though a friend of Grattan and Burke, in favour of Roman Catholic Emancipation, that many of the Ulster Whigs, and especially the Presbyterians, who were in favour of the Union, became hostile to it as soon as they found it would carry with it Catholic Emancipation, and that by others who were in favour both of Parliamentary reform and the removal of the Catholic disabilities, an Irish Parliament with a large

Nationalist majority elected on a low franchise was never seriously contemplated. The advocates of Parliamentary reform and Catholic Emancipation in Ireland before the Union were not in favour of household suffrage. The Catholics in many parts of Ireland were in favour of the Union.

Mr. Gladstone at this time had given notice of a Bill enabling Catholics to hold the Lord Chancellorship in England and the Lord Lieutenancy in Ireland. It was believed that one of the objects of the measure was to permit the future appointment of the eminent Ulster man, Sir Charles Russell, to the English Lord Chancellorship. No Ulster Liberal Unionist raised the least objection to this proposal. But Mr. Gladstone's great Nonconformist supporter of the City Temple, Dr. Parker, did, in language very similar to that of Mr. Gladstone's own Vatican pamphlets, and also very similar to what Mr. Johnston the Orange leader used. Dr. Parker said of the English part of Mr. Gladstone's Bill, he said nothing of the Irish: "that Popery is not only a religious faith but a State policy; that it is even a State policy first and a religious faith second; that it does not conceal the fact of wishing to rule the world, to subject kings and thrones when they stand in its way, and subject temporal authority to spiritual power." Mr. Gladstone's own words were quoted against him by his great Nonconformist ally on the Irish Home Rule question. Dr. Parker termed the measure "A Bill to remove the disabilities of men who have forfeited their moral freedom to hold the office of Lord

Chancellor," &c. The Bill was thrown out on the second reading and never re-introduced.

Sir Henry James, a Liberal Unionist, who had been invited over to Ulster by the Liberal Unionists, was in favour of the measure. Knowing well its object, he declared his readiness to give it his support. For doing so Mr. William Johnston called on his brother Orangemen to have nothing to do with Sir Henry James's visit to Ulster. The Rev. Dr. Kane, the Grand Master of the Belfast Orangemen, gave directly the opposite advice: indeed, the Orange Dr. Kane showed himself, as his followers did, much more Liberal than the Home Rule Liberal Dr. Parker of the City Temple, London.

Sir Henry, accompanied by Lord Wolmer, who had paid a previous visit to Belfast, arrived on the last day of March, 1891. They were followed by Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Thomas Lea, and Mr. Arnold-Forster. Notwithstanding his declarations in favour of Mr. Gladstone's Bill with respect to the English Lord Chancellorship and the Irish Viceroyalty, the Orangemen and the Protestant citizens generally turned out in large numbers to give Sir Henry a hearty welcome. As was said, it was not often they had to meet a great English lawyer who had adhered to his political convictions at the sacrifice of a Lord Chancellorship and a peerage. At the crowded meeting in the Ulster Hall it was stated that Sir Henry, if he had chosen, could have been the keeper of the Queen's conscience but at the sacrifice of his own. His speech produced a great effect. He laid down in emphatic language the

principle that protection and obedience were reciprocal, and that if this protection were withdrawn from the loyal minority, the majority in Ulster, they might have to protect themselves. This declaration, from one who was by his profession a man of peace, was cheered to the echo. Just before Sir Henry's visit, Mr. Gladstone, as has been shown, had blamed the Ulster Liberals for being degenerate, because they were not acting in the rebellious spirit of many of their grandfathers as United Irishmen. Sir Henry concluded sentence after sentence with the words, "You are degenerate." The irony was most telling. Even by the humblest artisan in the body of the hall the meaning was well understood. One of them said to some of his companions, "If Gladstone could hear this, it would do him good."

During his two days' visit to Belfast, Sir Henry James was the guest of Mr. Robert G. Dunville at Redburn, near Holywood, some four miles from Belfast. Mr. Dunville had inherited a large business and much wealth from his uncle, Mr. William Dunville, who for many years was one of the most prominent of the Belfast Liberals. Like the late Sir Edward Cowan, Mr. William Dunville was a Unitarian, and had been a warm supporter of Mr. Gladstone's policy of Church disestablishment in Ireland and of land reform. It had never occurred to him nor to any other Liberals in Ulster then that they would afterwards be accused by their Liberal leader of being degenerate for not being in favour of Irish Nationalist Home Rule, to which they and he had always been opposed.

Sir Henry James went to the city of Londonderry. He was there also well received. His visit to the North of Ireland, like the visits of Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain, produced an excellent and permanent impression. Mr. Robert Dunville's son, Mr. John Dunville, had become a private secretary to Lord Hartington. The appointment was another connecting link with Ulster. It was felt that it would have the effect of keeping the Liberal Unionist leader in immediate touch with Ulster affairs. The expectation has not been disappointed.

Very soon after Sir Henry James had returned to London, another public man of a very different character paid a flying political visit to Belfast. This was Mr. Parnell, who hurried over after having the evening before proposed in Committee on the Land Purchase Bill an amendment principally limiting the application of the money to the farmers who paid a rating under thirty pounds. This amendment was accepted. It produced great indignation in Ulster among the tenant farmers who supported the Government, and who justly regarded it as seriously interfering with the comprehensive system of land purchase they were anxious to have carried out. It was easy to see that if the advances to large farmers for purchase were to be restricted, and the smaller tenants to receive much the larger proportion of the thirty or forty millions, landlords would object to sell because the large farms would remain on their hands. Thus land purchase would be carried out to a partial and limited extent. The Government after-

wards yielded to their Ulster Liberal supporters and consented, especially on Sir Thomas Lea's representation, to raise the limitation to fifty pounds rating. But notwithstanding this amendment, the other restrictions which were introduced, as has been said, to meet the avowed hostility of Mr. Gladstone and many of the Irish Nationalists, rendered the measure less easily workable than it might otherwise have been.

To defend his conduct on Mr. Balfour's Land Purchase Bill was only the secondary motive of Mr. Parnell's visit to Belfast in the May of 1891. He went to encourage his Nationalist supporters, of whom he had still a large number among the Catholics of the town. St. Mary's Hall, where Catholic and Nationalist meetings were generally held, could not be granted to him by the bishop and his clergy. His friends succeeded in hiring the large Ulster Hall; but some complaint was made about the letting of it for his demonstration. Mr. Sexton, who still represented the West Division of Belfast, had been challenged to meet his old but now repudiated leader before his constituents. But this of course Mr. Sexton did not do. He has none of Mr. Healy's personally combative spirit, and has been perhaps not justly taunted with being wanting in political courage. Of this important attribute Mr. Parnell now showed himself to have abundance. He bravely faced his Nationalist foes. But his frequent journeys between London and Ireland, the strain upon his nervous system, and the growing difficulties of his position were

telling upon his constitution. It was observed that on the platform in the Ulster Hall he spoke hoarsely, that he had a cough and a stoop, and that he was, as the French say, paying to the utmost with his person.

His tactics had changed since his quarrel with Mr. Gladstone and the Home Rule Liberals. In *United Ireland*, of which he had forcibly taken possession, a cartoon was published representing two dogs tearing the Land Bill to pieces, and Mr. Parnell coming between them with a whip. One of the dogs wore spectacles and was evidently intended for Mr. Healy, as the other was for Mr. Labouchere. Though the Bill was still met with systematic obstruction, to this proceeding the discarded chief was now no party. With several additional guarantees against loss to meet Mr. Gladstone's objections, the Bill was at last sent up to the House of Lords. It was returned with some amendments to the representatives of the people and again sent to the Upper House. On the day of the prorogation of Parliament, the 5th of August, it received the Royal Assent, with a Tithes Bill and the Free Education Bill. The session, which had begun in the November of the former year, was an important one. It could not truly be said that Ireland blocked the way of all British legislation. The only fault Sir William Harcourt found with the Free Education Act was that it was a Liberal reform and ought not to have been passed by a Conservative Government.

At this juncture there was the prospect of a change in the Parliamentary representation of one of the

divisions of Belfast and also in the division of North Antrim. Mr. Cobain's conduct had caused the Belfast seat to be regarded as likely to be vacant some time before that event could be brought about. It was understood that Sir Charles Lewis would retire from North Antrim, but that it had been arranged by certain Conservatives in the city as well as in the county he should be succeeded by the Mayor of Belfast, Mr. Connor. The Mayor was a popular and cultivated gentleman, who would have been generally accepted by both Liberal Unionists and Conservatives as their candidate for East Belfast. But being neither a Presbyterian nor in any way identified with agriculture and the tenant farmers, he seemed generally to be the square man in the round hole as a Unionist candidate for North Antrim. Ultimately Mr. Wolff, the partner of Sir Edward Harland, became the member for the Belfast division. He had, however, previously been induced to withdraw his pretensions on receiving a kind of official letter stating that a persistence in his candidature might endanger his partner's seat for the Northern Division. The result showed that there was no ground for this apprehension. Sir William Charley and Mr. James Henderson were for a time the rival Conservative Unionist candidates; but Mr. Henderson at last gracefully withdrew his claims and the result was the return of Mr. Wolff.

Both in Belfast and in North Antrim the action of the Conservative Associations in selecting

candidates without any consideration for the Liberal Unionists gave rise to much discontent. By a continuation of this policy, that discontent has continued to exist. It has extended throughout most of the Ulster Unionist constituencies, and is a subject for serious consideration by all who have the interests of a united Unionist party at heart, by all who wish to act on the motto of union among the Unionists.

The two prospective vacancies in East Belfast and North Antrim were agitating the minds of the local politicians when Sir Charles Russell early in October arrived in the North of Ireland. He was present at his son's marriage in Belfast with his friend Professor Cuming's daughter. Between the two families there had been a long friendship, and much interest was taken in the young couple, associated as they were with Sir Charles, who now occupied so high a position as a lawyer and as an official of Mr. Gladstone's last Government, with strong future claims to the very highest judicial rank. The day before, it was known that Mr. W. H. Smith, the leader of the House of Commons, and the First Lord of the Treasury, had expired at Walmer Castle. But it was not known until the following day, October 7th, that on the night before death had claimed another victim, in the person of Mr. Parnell. As I left St. Malachy's Chapel, where the marriage of Mr. Russell and Miss Cuming took place in the presence of a large number of relatives and friends, a telegram was put into my hands containing the words, "Parnell is dead."

The news had reached London on that Wednesday about noon, and was of course soon flashed along the wires over all parts of the United Kingdom.

I met Sir Charles Russell in Dr. Cuming's drawing-room. On communicating to him the news I had just received, I am not sure whether he had or had not heard it before. He looked very grave.

There was something pathetic in Mr. Parnell's death. Nine days before, on Sunday, September 27th, he appeared at Creggs, in County Galway, to defend himself publicly from imputations made against him by some of his late colleagues respecting his dealings with the Paris funds. He had travelled all the way from Brighton on the previous day against the advice of his physician. One of his arms was in a sling. He was visibly very ill. He said: "I am threatened with a burial, but ill as I am, I shall live to bury some of those who are my most bitter opponents." Just a fortnight afterwards there was the monster funeral procession to the Glasnevin Cemetery. The wreath from his admirers in Belfast had upon it the word "Murdered."

The death of Mr. W. H. Smith had consequences to Ireland of a different kind from that of Mr. Parnell. By it the leadership of the House of Commons and the First Lordship of the Treasury had become vacant. Who was to be Mr. Smith's successor? Mr. Goschen as Chancellor of the Exchequer had strong claims, but he

was a Liberal Unionist. Lord Hartington was the leader of the Liberal Unionists. It was believed by his friends in the North of Ireland that he would be offered the leadership of the House of Commons by Lord Salisbury, who was summoned from the Continent. When Mr. Goschen gave way to Mr. Balfour it was hoped that the Irish Chief Secretary would be able to retain that office and still lead the House of Commons. But the strain would have been too great. The attempt to create a new office of assistant to the Chief Secretary in the House of Commons had not been successful in the person of Colonel King-Harman, who had recently died. At last it became known that Mr. Balfour would take both the official positions held by Mr. Smith, and that his successor as Chief Secretary would be Mr. Jackson, the Financial Secretary.

Among the Unionists the departure of Mr. Balfour from Dublin Castle was felt to be an irreparable loss. His character in the most difficult of ministerialist posts had risen year after year in his long struggle against criminal lawlessness. At first the contest seemed unequal. It appeared that he would have to succumb before those who were doing their best to make Ireland ungovernable. A year passed away and the Crimes Act began to be steadily enforced. In another year, as we have seen, there was a decided diminution in the number of outrages. At the close of the last session the Royal Speech congratulated

"My Lords and Gentlemen" on the great improvement in the state of the country. When he left the Irish Chief Secretaryship, Mr. Balfour had triumphed in the face of greater difficulties and more unscrupulous tactics than any of his predecessors had had to meet. The mistakes in the earlier administration of the Crimes Act had been remedied. In four years, more had been done than had been thought possible. The resources of civilization had not been exhausted; law and order might be considered fully restored. There never was an Irish Chief Secretary more respected by the Irish Unionists than Mr. Balfour. One and all were ready to exclaim, "Well done!"

Before the year ended there was another change, and as was thought another loss to Ireland. It was noticed early in December that the Marquis of Hartington had to disappoint two public audiences on account of the illness of his father, then eighty-three years of age. Before the end of the month the marquis was removed from the House of Commons by the death of the venerable duke. Thus Mr. Balfour became leader of the Conservatives and Mr. Chamberlain of the Liberal Unionists in that assembly. The Marquis of Hartington's elevation to the Upper House was regretted by those whom he had in Ulster inspired with so much confidence. It was known that, as Mr. Balfour had himself stated, there would be a dissolution of the Parliament after the session on which the two Houses were about to enter, and that on the question of the maintenance of the Union the constituencies would be a second

time called upon to pronounce a verdict. The year 1892 was therefore when it began regarded with great interest and not a little anxiety. The Unionists throughout Ulster were looking around them, counting their friends and their enemies, and being fully determined not to be wanting to their own cause.

CHAPTER XIV

1892

Mr. Balfour's Visit to Belfast Postponed—A Great Disappointment—A Local Government Bill for Ireland—Mr. Sexton's Amendment—Diminution of the Ministerial Majority—Sir William Harcourt Exultant—The Irish Local Government Bill—Unfairness of the Nationalists—Treatment of Belfast—Liberal Unionist Banquet to Mr. Chamberlain—Belfast created a City and its Mayor a Lord Mayor—Recent Returns showing the Prosperity of Belfast—Unionist Ulster Preparing for the Worst.

AT the beginning of the new year, though Mr. Balfour had ceased to be Irish Chief Secretary, he was expected in the North of Ireland. He had been some time before invited to pay a public visit to Belfast and speak on the great question which would be before the constituencies at the impending dissolution. This visit he had agreed to pay in the third week of January. It was alluded to at the meeting of the Belfast Town Council on the first day of the year. In the reference to it there was some soreness. He had declined, it was said, a large public banquet, but he was to be entertained by his host, Sir Edward Harland, the member for the Northern Division of the town, and had, while refusing other invitations, accepted

one to a luncheon in the Ulster Reform Club, of which the members, with the exception of the ten who had become Home Rulers, were all Liberal Unionists. The arrangements for Mr. Balfour's reception by the Ulster Reform Club, by Sir Edward Harland, and also by the Mayor and Corporation of Belfast, made steady progress during the fortnight. But the sad illness and subsequent death of the Duke of Clarence prevented the visit at that time from being paid. From Dublin, on the 14th, Mr. Balfour wrote to Belfast stating that he could not of course come while His Royal Highness was so dangerously ill. The disappointment was great; but under the circumstances it was inevitable. After the duke's death it was hoped that the late Irish Chief Secretary would still be able to go to Belfast and Londonderry before the meeting of Parliament. Repeated and earnest efforts were made to induce Mr. Balfour to comply with the wishes of so many of his Ulster admirers. But the day for the opening of Parliament was very near, and the new leader of the House of Commons had a very great deal to do.

When the former session began it was stated that if time allowed of it the Government would introduce and carry a Local Government Bill for Ireland before its close. When this was not practicable a pledge was given that such a Bill would be introduced in the following session. It was felt that this would be a fitting termination to the Unionist Parliament which was to be dissolved in the summer. Mr. Balfour was committed to this Irish Local Government Bill; but

the Conservative country gentlemen in Ulster were opposed to any such measure. Their newspapers condemned it in anticipation. It had been expected that during Mr. Balfour's visit he would have to give some intimation as to the form such a Bill would assume, and to listen to some strong remonstrances against this avowed policy.

The measure was announced in the Queen's Speech on the 9th February. Notice of its introduction was given. Before, however, it could be taken into consideration Mr. Sexton proposed an amendment declaring that the Parliament at Westminster was incapable of legislating satisfactorily for Ireland. This, it was asserted, was shown by the failure of the Irish Land Purchase Act, which had only been on the Statute Book little more than six months. The debate, which began on Monday the 15th of February, was not expected to conclude before the midnight of Tuesday, and many members thought that it might be continued until Thursday, when Mr. Balfour was to bring forward his Irish Local Government Bill. As no division was thought at all likely on the Monday night, a large number of Unionists were absent when the closure was moved by the proposer of the amendment, and permitted by the Speaker to be affirmed. The result was that the Government against the amendment had only a majority of twenty-one. The division was a surprise; but the Opposition were exultant. This was the first time the ministers had had any considerable diminution in their Unionist majority, which had been so remark-

ably steady during five full sessions. Sir William Harcourt went down to Whitechapel, and, saying nothing about the manner in which the division had taken place, assumed with much glorification that it was equivalent to a ministerial defeat, and that it might be regarded as something like a notice to quit. This was very characteristic. Sir William thought no Government ought to carry on with so small a majority as twenty-one, no matter how the diminution had been brought about. He did not foresee that the time was not distant when the next Government would carry a new and unexpected clause of the greatest importance in their Home Rule Bill by a majority of fourteen, that a Prime Minister, of whom Sir William was one of his colleagues, would publicly declare a majority to be always a majority, and that he and his colleagues would not resign nor dissolve the Parliament while they possessed a majority of two. The effect of the member for Derby's boasting of the reduction in a single instance of the ministerial majority was to send that majority up again to seventy, eighty, ninety-two, and even to a hundred and twenty.

In Ulster, however, there was some indignation at the absence of several of the Unionist representatives from the snatch division. Earnest Irish Unionists, it was said, ought not to have been absent, nor have allowed themselves on a matter so vital to their constituents to be outwitted.

Three days afterwards Mr. Balfour, as the leader of the Government, brought forward the long-

promised Irish Local Government Bill. Its principal provisions had, it was said, been settled before Mr. W. H. Smith's death, while Mr. Balfour was still Irish Chief Secretary. It was justly regarded as Mr. Balfour's Bill. It took the barony as the unit and proposed to create both baronial and county councils, to which, as in the English Act, administrative functions were to be given. The franchise for both councils was to be the same as the one for the election of members of the House of Commons, with, however, the addition that peers and women householders were also to vote, the exclusion of those who had not paid the county cess or were illiterate, and the extension of this franchise to the two counties of towns and the eleven municipal towns which were to become counties. Then there was to be the cumulative vote for the protection of minorities.

The franchise was, it will be seen, a very broad one. In the South and West the cumulative vote might give little protection to minorities, but it would afford effective representation to Nationalist minorities in Belfast and in the Protestant counties. Every cesspayer was to have a vote. The grand juries, however, in the old fashion, were to retain their judicial as distinguished from their administrative functions, and the power of awarding compensation for malicious injuries. The baronial and county councils were to have the repair of the roads and the appointment of a certain number of the governors of the district asylums; but these governors were not to exceed the number nominated by the Lord Lieutenant, because

the Treasury paid half of the cost. It was stated, however, that if the councils would take over the whole expense, the Government would have no objection to them having all those appointments. The control of the police was not given to the councils. There was a provision allowing twenty cess-payers to present a petition to a judge asking for the removal of a county council, and this petition was to be treated in the same manner as an election one. If the complaint was found just a new council was to be nominated by the Lord Lieutenant. A joint committee of seven members of a county council and seven of a grand jury, with the sheriff, were to control the capital as distinguished from current expenditure.

These were the principal features of the Bill. Impartially considered and compared with what had so long existed in Ireland, the measure was very valuable. In some respects it did not carry out the principles of representation with taxation so fully as it might have done. It was obviously a compromise, but had the Opposition taken to the measure it might have been much improved in Committee. They soon showed that they had no intention of doing anything of the kind. As Mr. Balfour developed his plan he was interrupted by laughter and ironical cheers. It suited the policy of the Irish Nationalists and their British allies to represent the Bill as too absurd for discussion. As soon as the leader of the House had sat down Mr. John Redmond rose and declared the measure a sham and an insult to Ireland. Mr. Justin M'Carthy said that it was based on the vital principle

of the Irish people being Hottentots, and Mr. T. Healy that a more contemptible Bill, or one which was more impossible for Irishmen to accept, could not be presented. Sir William Harcourt asserted that a measure more insulting to the people in substance and in form could not be conceived. Another Nationalist member went out of his way to attack the Mayor of Belfast, who he said was to have been Mr. Balfour's entertainer during the visit he had recently intended to pay, and whom he accused of putting money into his pockets through his partner from contracts with the Corporation. It was retorted the next morning in Belfast that the Mayor received no salary, while the Nationalist Lord Mayor of Dublin had a large one which had recently been increased, and that his calumniator would not venture to make a charge of corruption against the Mayor of Belfast where it was not protected by privilege.

The Irish Local Government Bill never received candid consideration from the Nationalists and their British friends. It was also somewhat lukewarmly supported by several of the Ulster Conservative members. The Liberal Unionist representatives were, however, heartily in favour of it, as was Mr. Chamberlain, their leader in the House of Commons, whose practical experience of municipal government in its most successful form was superior to that of any other member of Parliament.

Mr. Balfour was taunted with not intending to pass the Bill. He was, however, very much in earnest. It was not, indeed, until the session was

far advanced that the measure was read a second time; but it was read a second time, and not by a majority of twenty-one, which had seemed to Sir William Harcourt so portentous of the fall of the ministry, but by the large majority of ninety-two. It was then found that, with an impending dissolution, the supporters of the Government thought more of their constituencies than of the House. The Bill had to be withdrawn. Like the measure, also proposed by Mr. Balfour, for dealing with Private Bills in Ireland and Scotland, it was dreaded as being regarded as part of a reasonable substitute for Home Rule. One of the Scotch members supporting Home Rule said, "We don't want any such makeshifts for Ireland as Local Government and Private Bill legislation. We are not going to be duped." It may be a question whether those who used this language did not go farther and fare worse.

A Belfast Asylum Bill, separating the institution from one for the county of Antrim, was at the same time opposed by the Nationalists on the ground that it ought to have been included in the Irish Local Government Bill, which they had declared they would do all they could to defeat. It was observed that any private or local measure for Belfast was always regarded with bitter hostility by the National representatives, who thus showed what the great and progressive Irish town had to expect from an Irish Parliament and Government in which they would always have a commanding supremacy. The Nationalists continued to complain loudly that Catholics were

not elected to the Belfast Town Council. But Mr. Sexton himself had succeeded in introducing into a local Bill the reduction of the Belfast municipal franchise, practically, as was thought, to the same level as the Parliamentary, while, though two years Lord Mayor of Dublin, he had never proposed any similar reform there nor in other Irish towns where the municipal franchise was indefensibly high. The Nationalists in Belfast, who complained, and still complain, of the non-election of Catholics to the Town Council, would never think of voting for a Catholic Liberal Unionist nor for a Catholic Conservative. This it is but fair to say. At this time, too, the Nationalist members ridiculed the proposal in the Local Government Bill to give to minorities the cumulative vote, which, as has been said, if generally carried out, might redress some glaring electoral anomalies, municipal and Parliamentary, in Ireland.

Ever since Mr. Chamberlain had visited Belfast he had shown the greatest interest in the town, which he regarded as the citadel of the Union. It was proposed by the Liberal Unionist Club to give him a banquet in celebration of his appointment as the Liberal Unionist leader of the House of Commons in succession to the Duke of Devonshire. Mr. Chamberlain expressed a wish that a Belfast gentleman should take the chair on the occasion. Mr. Thomas Sinclair was selected to fulfil the function of chairman. The dinner took place at the Criterion three weeks after the first reading of the Irish Local Government Bill. Mr. Sinclair, as he always does, spoke temperately,

earnestly, and firmly. He declared before he sat down that the Unionists of Ulster would have nothing to do with an Irish Parliament and Government, that they would refuse to recognise them in any way. This announcement was loudly cheered, and, as was noticed at the time, by no person more than by Mr. Chamberlain himself. In reply to the toast of his health, the new Liberal Unionist leader in the House of Commons particularly remarked on the contemptuous manner in which Mr. Gladstone and his principal lieutenants referred to Ulster. Mr. Chamberlain said that now no secret was made of the Home Rule Liberal leader being prepared to force a new Home Rule measure on the Northern province, even at the risk of a civil war.

Years had passed on since the first measure had been introduced. The opposition to this policy in Belfast and the Northern Ulster counties had become more and more formidable. It gathered strength with the prosperity and progress of the town which was so proudly called the capital of Ulster and the commercial capital of all Ireland.

In recognition of that prosperity and progress, Belfast had by the Government now conferred upon it the title and privileges of a city. It was indeed not known what those special privileges were; but the Mayor was to be called a Lord Mayor, and even as was thought on doubtful authority a Right Honourable.

The Nationalists in the House of Commons could not conceal their vexation at this titular distinction

granted to Belfast by a Unionist Government. They asked if Southern Irish towns which were comparatively small, and which were relatively declining, ought not also to be called cities and have Lord Mayors. For them nothing was too good: for Belfast nothing was too bad.

Yet the recent returns showed that the Parliamentary borough of Belfast was rapidly advancing to the 300,000 of a population to which it has virtually arrived. The customs revenue returns were also yearly increasing by some £30,000. From the Belfast receipts, indeed, reductions might be made for certain excise duties which were placed under the same head. But when all this was fully allowed for, the rapid increase in the customs was remarkable and undeniable. Dublin could show nothing like it, nor the other indications of manufacturing industry and commercial success to be seen by the merest casual visitor to the Ulster town.

The total valuation of Belfast in the year 1862 was £279,087. In the year 1892 the valuation was £717,077. It has steadily increased during the last two years to £819,978. It has virtually trebled in thirty-two years. The rate of increase is extraordinary. With all its metropolitan advantages, Dublin in respect to valuation is now, as in other statistics of progress, much exceeded by Belfast, which has no such privileges. During thirty years, more than 40,000 new buildings have been built, with few exceptions indeed, all at the expense of the citizens of Belfast themselves. In 1892, the year now

referred to, there were 2,215 new houses, and ninety new streets built in the town. The average yearly number of new houses now is 2,500. These are principally for the dwellings of artisans, who, as has recently been remarked, in Belfast find employment not only for themselves, but for their families: the boys and girls in various industries different from those of their fathers. Hence, when there is depression in one occupation, there is generally prosperity in others, and the wolf is thus kept off from the humblest threshold. The tonnage of the ships is now over 2,110,000. The increase is more than 83,000 a year. The Harbour Commissioners in recent years have spent a million on the improvement of their trust, and are contemplating additional costly enterprises for docks and an additional channel.

Such was the progress of the newly created city when, as the summer of 1892 approached, the constituencies were about to be appealed to on the question of Home Rule. In opposition to that movement the Unionist citizens of Belfast placed themselves at the head of the whole loyal population of Ulster, and an elaborate organisation was entered upon to resist Home Rule to the last.

CHAPTER XV

1892

The Origin of the Ulster Convention—An Important Gathering in Downshire House—Publication of the Proceedings—Indignation of the Nationalists—Large Representative Meeting in Belfast—"Better be governed by Russia"—Completion of the Plan of Organisation—Lord Salisbury's Speech on Ulster—The Eve of the Convention—The Great Day—That Frightful Silence—Hypothetical Resistance—The Demonstrations in the Botanic Gardens—The Convention League Founded—Mr. Gladstone and the Appeal of the Irish Non-Episcopal Clergy—The Reply to the Appeal by the Rev. J. Guinness Rogers—Sir William Harcourt on the Convention—The General Election and its Results—Defeat of the Gladstonian Candidates in Ulster.

FOR more than two years it had been acknowledged that some decisive step ought to be taken to convince the constituencies of Great Britain that the feeling against Home Rule among the Protestants and respectable Catholics in Ulster was intense. On this question the Unionists were, and are, irreconcilable. The nearer the time for the general election approached, the more necessary it was that the people who had such deep convictions on this subject should show that they were very much in earnest, that they

were determined not to accept on any terms what was so absurdly called for them Home Rule.

In the autumn of the past year, 1891, Dr. Rentoul, the Unionist member for East Down, had publicly recommended the holding of an Ulster Convention. Such a project from that time began to be generally spoken of. It was not, however, until Mr. Sinclair had returned to Belfast, after presiding at the Liberal Unionist banquet to Mr. Chamberlain in the Criterion, that it began to be seen the recommendation of a Convention ought to take a practical shape. Mr. Chamberlain was understood to be warmly in its favour. He had more than once said that the Ulster Unionists ought to take more energetic steps in opposition to Home Rule than they had generally seemed disposed to do. The substance of his advice always was, "Have a large subscription list opened and show that you are determined to resist. No Government will ever dare to coerce you."

The Unionists having a decided majority in the House of Commons, it was, however, for some time thought that there was no danger of that majority becoming a minority at the impending general election. But Mr. Gladstone's published statistics on this matter, and especially his confident assumption that the constituencies generally would do what a number of them had done in the bye-elections, began to cause considerable anxiety where the Union was regarded as the only security to the Loyalists against oppression by a Nationalist majority. A statement attributed to Mr. Schnadhorst that the Home Rule

Liberal party would have a majority of 130 at the general election roused the Unionists to the necessity of at once doing something for themselves. It was acknowledged that no time was to be lost. The Liberal Unionists generally were anxious that the Irish Local Government Bill should pass before the dissolution. It was rumoured, however, that after the principle had been affirmed on the second reading the measure would be withdrawn, and that the Parliament would immediately afterwards be dissolved before people went to spend their summer holidays at the sea-side or in Continental towns. Some of the Ulster Conservative Unionists did not like the interference with the existing grand jury system, and thus they were disposed to advise the ministers to leave the question open until the next Parliament. Mr. Balfour's visit to Belfast, it appeared, was being indefinitely postponed. It was rumoured, by those who professed to know, that the leader of the Government in the House of Commons would not appear in the new city before the dissolution.

The Unionists therefore of both sections saw that no time was to be lost. A meeting on the invitation of Mr. Sinclair was held of six representative Liberal Unionists and Conservatives in the Ulster Reform Club. It was then resolved to hold a great Ulster Convention. When this step was fully decided upon, two gentlemen from Belfast were appointed to go to London and inform the leaders of the two Unionist parties how necessary it was that some action should be taken. The Home Rule newspapers, and the

Home Rule members of Parliament were confidently stating that though the Ulster Unionists might talk, they would never fight, and they were reminded of the threat of the Orange clergyman, the Rev. John Flanagan, at the time when the Irish Church question was before the country, that if Her Majesty consented to pass a Bill of Disestablishment, he and his brother Orangemen would kick her crown into the Boyne. That clergyman had since died; but his foolish words, though they had been repudiated at the time they were uttered by all sensible Protestants, were recalled by Home Rulers and attributed to the Unionists generally, who had always laughed at their absurdity. On the question of the Irish Church disestablishment the Ulster Protestants, as we have seen, had been divided. But they were practically unanimous in opposition to Home Rule.

This was soon to be shown. On Thursday, the last day of March, an important gathering, which was justly regarded as historical, was held at Downshire House, in Belgrave Square. Lord Arthur Hill, then regarded as the representative of his noble family, as well as a trusted official of the Government, took the chair. Mr. Sinclair and Dr. Kane, the two gentlemen who had been active members of the Belfast conference, laid before the meeting the proposal for a Convention composed of delegates from every parish or polling district in Ulster. This Convention was to let the British people publicly and formally know that, though loyal to the Throne, the Ulster Unionists protested against any measure which would separate

them from what they regarded as their inheritance in the Imperial Legislature, that they had an utter and unconquerable distrust of an Irish Legislative Assembly, that they would passively resist its laws, and that on them its taxation would have no binding force. The Nationalist leaders were to be appealed to not to persevere with a policy which would eventually produce disturbance and interfere with the progress of the country. The British people were to be entreated to pause before handing over the two Irelands to a struggle which would be certain to be disastrous to both.

After a long discussion a resolution was passed unanimously, approving of the proposals laid before the meeting. It was decided that the organisation of the Convention should be at once proceeded with, and a sub-committee of Ulster members was appointed consisting of Colonel Saunderson, Sir Edward Harland, and Mr. T. W. Russell, to co-operate with the Committee to be immediately formed in Ulster.

An abstract of a report of these proceedings in Downshire House was the next morning published in the London and principal provincial newspapers. There was no disposition to hide what was intended from the full light of day. This was nothing of a conspiracy, which, in the words already quoted of Brutus, was shamed even to show its dangerous brow by night. The men who took part in the work thus set on foot represented the most resolute, prosperous, and energetic of the whole Ulster population.

As soon as the resolution of the meeting in

Downshire House became known, the Home Rule, and of course the Nationalist newspapers, were most violent and scurrilous in the denunciations of the Ulster Unionists. In language, indeed, there was now very little difference between the Home Rule Liberal organs in London and some of the principal English cities and the most extreme of the Irish Nationalist journals. They declared that the districts from which half of the Convention would go were overwhelmingly Nationalist, and that "the immigrant population was only half of a single province." These Nationalists, pursuing the policy they had condemned in Lord Rossmore and others, spoke of holding a rival Convention in Belfast at the same time as the Unionists. The intention, however, was ridiculed. It was asked, what would such a counter-demonstration prove in Belfast, and the Unionist counties of which it was the centre? Mr. Sexton called the attention of the House of Commons to the meeting in Downshire House. He was told from Belfast, that though he represented one of its divisions, he scarcely ever visited the town, and the reason which had been given for his absence was that the whole atmosphere of the place was hostile to the cause he represented.

Undeterred by the attacks of which the meeting in London had been the object, in the following week Colonel Saunderson and Mr. T. W. Russell went to Belfast to assist in the organisation of the Convention. A large and most representative meeting was summoned for Friday, the 8th of April, just a

week after the Downshire House assembly. It met in the Chamber of Commerce; but the room soon became inconveniently crowded, and there had to be an adjournment to the larger Central Hall in Rosemary Street. The rule in Belfast has been that during their terms of office the mayors should not take a prominent part in politics; but this occasion was felt to be an exceptional one, and Sir Daniel Dixon, the first Lord Mayor of the city, presided. Such a gathering of influential personages had seldom, if ever, been before seen in Belfast. Mr. T. W. Russell said that the modern Ulster city would now be the scene of a Convention which could not be paralleled since the great historical Convention at Dungannon in the time of the Volunteers. The occasion was in fact far more serious. Colonel Saunderson emphatically called Mr. Sexton's attention to the declaration that on the question of being governed by an Irish Parliament and Ministry there was no difference of opinion among the Unionists, that they all agreed such a Government would give them no fair play, afford them no protection, and be to them an intolerable tyranny. "I would rather," said the Colonel, "be governed by Russia."

It was decided to hold the Convention about Whitsuntide. During all the month of April the work of organisation was steadily carried on. As a member of the General Committee I may say that the utmost good feeling as well as the most determined resolution were at all times displayed. Under such grave circumstances the desire generally mani-

fested was to give and take, to bear and forbear, to make individual and even party sacrifices for the common cause. Nothing could be more untrue than the assertion afterwards made that the General Committee and the various committees formed from it were mostly Orange. The fact was the reverse. The Orangemen generally, and indeed throughout all the proceedings, were content to play a somewhat secondary part. The lead in organising the Convention was taken by the Liberal Unionists and the moderate Conservatives.

On the 29th of April the plan of organisation was published. It had been very carefully considered. There was to be a unit for the representation of delegates in each polling district of counties and each Parliamentary division in boroughs. Each of these units was to send delegates in proportion to its strength. Thus the Nationalist and Home Rule objection already made was met, that there were some parts of Ulster, that is in the more remote and Celtic West, where there were not many Unionists, and indeed, as it was asserted, scarcely any at all. Where the Unionists were few there would be few delegates; where there were many there would be a corresponding increase. No Conservative nor Liberal Unionist Association was interfered with. Account was taken both of a separate and combined electoral organisation. The Organising Committee was composed of forty-four members of the Executive Committee, and it was in communication with the various local committees throughout Ulster. There were a

Finance and a Consulting Committee, meeting generally twice a week, in the central offices at Belfast. A Corresponding Committee and a Railway Arrangements Committee were also formed.

The principal object was to have as complete a representation of delegates from all Ulster as possible. They were to meet on the appointed day in some large central place in Belfast; they were to be admitted by ticket; and to them the Convention was to be confined. It was seen, however, at once that large demonstrations would have to be held on the same afternoon in other places of the town. The people, independently of the delegates, would, it soon became known, flock from all parts of Ulster, and it would be necessary that they should be addressed by prominent public men.

At first it was thought that the Ulster Hall, with its balconies and platforms, might accommodate all the delegates. When, however, the reports came in from the various polling districts, it was found that there would be some eleven or twelve thousand of those representatives alone at the Convention. No hall, no public building in Belfast, could accommodate such a number. It was then determined to erect a large wooden building for the purpose, on a vacant space called the Plains, reserved for new houses south of the town, near the Queen's College, and communicating with the Botanic Gardens, where separate demonstrations could be made independently of the Convention proper.

During May the business of the various committees

went vigorously on. In all parts of Ulster the utmost earnestness was shown. The work was powerfully stimulated by a speech of the Prime Minister at the annual grand meeting of the Primrose League in Covent Garden Theatre. Lord Salisbury spoke out with a frankness and force which alarmed the Irish Nationalist members, but went directly to the hearts of all the Unionists who were looking forward to their Great Convention. He said Parliament had the right to govern the people of Ulster, but it had no right to sell them into slavery. He did not believe in the unrestricted power of Parliaments any more than he did in the unrestricted power of Kings. James II. stepped outside the limits of the spirit of the Constitution, and they knew how the people of Ulster met him. If a similar abuse of power on the part of a Parliament or a King should ever again occur, the Prime Minister did not believe the people of Ulster had lost their sturdy love of freedom nor their detestation of arbitrary power.

These words on the Friday evening after they had been spoken produced a sensation in the lobbies of the House of Commons. They very much annoyed Mr. Gladstone. It was afterwards stated by two of the leaders of the Opposition that the Convention had been suggested by Lord Salisbury's speech. The fact was the reverse. The Convention, as we have seen, was being organised, and indeed all the more important arrangements were in progress, before the Prime Minister addressed the audience in the Covent

Garden Theatre. Lord Salisbury's words, as here quoted, were referred to at the various committee meetings of the Convention in Belfast and Ulster. It was evident from the Prime Minister's whole speech that the dissolution was likely to occur before the end of June. Every effort was therefore made to hold the Convention on the 17th of that next month. Day and night the carpenters worked at the large wooden building which was steadily rising. The only fear was that it could not be ready by the appointed time.

Large sums of money were being subscribed for the purposes of the Convention, and for what might afterwards be required with the same object. Tried by the pecuniary test, which O'Connell declared to be the most infallible in all such great political movements, nothing could be considered more successful than the work then in progress.

As the great day drew near the earnestness of the people increased rather than diminished. The meetings held in all the polling districts of the province contributed much to spread the popular enthusiasm. On the Thursday night, the 16th of June, on the eve of the gathering, not only were wishes expressed but even prayers were offered up that the morrow would be fine. It was known that the enormous building in which the meeting would be held was finished, and that it could not only accommodate the delegates but many other persons who were invited to be present on the platform, which was itself capable of holding a large gathering. The delegates from

all the country districts went to Belfast at their own expense. Many of them had travelled long distances from the early morning. An attempt afterwards was made to show that some of them were paid; it utterly failed and had to be abandoned. Each delegate represented a large number of people in each district. To be chosen as a representative was regarded as a distinction which would continue through life.

They who had been accustomed to the somewhat noisy demonstrations on the 12th of July and on other Ulster anniversaries, were astonished at the contrast afforded by the bearing of the delegates as they marched through Belfast to what was now called the Convention Pavilion. There were no drums, there were no banners, no cheering, no defiant cries of "No Surrender!" A French writer has referred to the absence of all noise from the ranks of a British army when it is about to meet an enemy on the field of battle. He has called that silence frightful—*silence affreux*. The silence of the delegates and their friends on going to and returning from the Convention seemed something phenomenal. All seemed to be conscious that they were engaged in a very serious business, that they might have sooner or later to make great sacrifices, to put all that was dear to them as citizens and men to the hazard.

Within the pavilion the gravity and the silence of the enormous assembly appeared even more impressive. This was a subject of general remark from those who looked from the platform over the sea of upturned faces. The bearing, indeed, of the more than 11,000

delegates who were present, packed as in a Roman amphitheatre, and all, as it cannot be too frequently repeated, representing many other people besides themselves, can never be forgotten by those who witnessed the extraordinary scene. The proceedings were opened with the singing of part of the Scotch metrical version of the Forty-sixth Psalm, and with prayer by the venerable Protestant Primate, Dr. Knox. He who had been a Liberal and a Church reformer more than a quarter of a century before, had certainly no sympathy with the old aggressive Orangeism. The speaking too was in keeping with the dignified and almost menacing restraint of the audience. The Duke of Abercorn presided. One of the most kindly and the least demonstrative of noblemen in Ulster, his language was very simple. It was summed up in his concluding sentence, which called forth emphatic assent from some 13,000 voices in the body of the pavilion and on the platform: "Men of the North, once more I say we will not have Home Rule." The duke was followed by Sir William Ewart, one of the greatest representatives of the linen trade in the world. He moved the six resolutions, and they were seconded by Mr. Thomas Sinclair, the ex-president of the Ulster Liberal Unionist Association. The resolutions might be considered as an emphatic repetition and endorsement of those which had been taken up to London last April, and accepted by the meeting at Downshire House, and since that time at all the meetings throughout Ulster for the organisation of the Convention and the election of the delegates.

It has been said that those resolutions were practically a declaration of war. They undoubtedly foreshadowed, and were intended to foreshadow, resistance in a hypothetical sense, that is with respect to the possible establishment of an Irish Parliament and Government. The words of Mr. Sinclair's speech most loudly and most repeatedly applauded were in reply to the threat he stated Mr. Gladstone had recently given, to coerce the Ulster Unionists if necessary with the Queen's troops. "Fellow countrymen," said Mr. Sinclair, "Mr. Gladstone's threat is a serious one, but, nevertheless, we can never falter in our resolve. We are children of the Revolution of 1688, and, cost what it may, we will have nothing to do with a Dublin Parliament. If it be ever set up we shall simply ignore its existence. Its Acts will be but as waste paper; the police will find our barracks preoccupied with our own constabulary; its judges will sit in empty court-houses. The early efforts of its Executive will be spent in devising means to deal with a passive resistance to its taxation co-extensive with loyalist Ulster."

The other speeches were all more or less representative. The Ulster members intentionally remained in the background: nothing was said against the Catholic clergy. There was not a word even against what was represented as a surrender made by the Government earlier in the week by a promise to Mr. Sexton to modify a clause in the Irish Education Bill, in order, it was said, to admit to its pecuniary advantages the schools of the Christian Brothers. At such

a great assembly, spoken words seemed of comparatively minor importance. The demonstration itself was the great thing. It dwarfed everything else.

As it broke up, the crowds gathered round the Convention building in so many thousands were admitted to the Botanic Gardens. In a short time the green grass was covered by black masses of people. It was calculated that there were not fewer than 150,000 persons present, all quiet, all orderly, all as in the Convention, very much in earnest. At the first platform the Lord Mayor of Belfast presided; at the second the Mayor of Londonderry; at the third a working man. Nearly all the Ulster Unionist members were present: many of them spoke. In the speeches, as in the bearing of the enormous audiences, similar characteristics to those which marked the delegates in the Convention that morning were observed. Every one appeared to be impressed with the gravity of the occasion, with the tremendous issues at stake.

The fact was very obvious in the streets as the people returned from the Gardens. Many of them had to leave by five o'clock to catch the trains which were to carry them to their distant homes. They joined the enormous crowds in the streets, wending their way with the same object. On that memorable Friday there were in Belfast not less than a quarter of a million visitors. To the last, the utmost good order was preserved. These were the bone and sinew of the working population of the most prosperous

parts of Ulster in the most prosperous of Irish towns. Scarcely a case of drunkenness was to be seen. As the summer evening wore on, the people disappeared as if by magic. In a short time the streets were deserted. In passing by the Convention building and the Botanic Gardens at midnight, after the throng and bustle during the day of such a great multitude of human beings, the silence of a different kind from that of the meeting in the morning was startling and oppressive. There seemed a sense of unreality in all that had gone.

In the Convention, however, the Convention League took birth. This still exists, with its Watch and other Committees, all preserving the organisation alive, vigorous, and ready for action. The effect has been permanent. On the very next day Mr. Gladstone, at a luncheon of Nonconformists in Clapham, showed how keenly he felt the demonstration at Belfast, and the recent appeal of nearly 1,000 Non-Episcopal Protestant ministers of Ireland, and their office-bearers, addressed to their Protestant Nonconformist brethren in England. He spoke of certain correspondents who did not agree with the appeal, but he refused to give their names, because, he said, they were afraid of being boycotted. He had, however, no hesitation in questioning the trustworthiness of so many signatures to the document appended by so large a body of those who before the Irish disestablishment would have also been called Nonconformist ministers. He admitted that the speaking at the Convention was generally moderate,

but again assumed that the Ulster Protestants had degenerated from their ancestors in the days of the Volunteers and of the United Irishmen. He accused the Unionists of Belfast of intolerance, because the municipal electors did not choose Catholics to the City Council: yet Mr. Gladstone, in some advice to Sir George Trevelyan about Wales, had given the opinion that in the elections to the County Councils there party political considerations should prevail. He again declared that the Nationalist party had been led by Mr. Parnell as a Protestant, that Dublin had a Protestant Lord Mayor, and that Catholics elected Protestant members of Parliament. But he overlooked the fact that there had never been a Unionist Lord Mayor elected in Dublin since the Nationalist movement had become serious, while before that time, as an example of tolerance, it had often been quoted against Belfast that the Dublin Corporation alternately elected Liberal and Conservative Lord Mayors. All that the Unionist municipal electors of Belfast did was to decline voting for Nationalists.

Mr. Gladstone's misrepresentations or half-truths were read with astonishment in Ulster. That astonishment did not decrease when on the following Monday the *Times* published the names of all the signatories to the appeal of the Irish Non-Episcopal clergy. He had refused to give the names of his correspondents; the names to the appeal of which he had questioned the authenticity were at once given to the world. A reply to the Irish Non-Episcopal address was immediately afterwards drawn up by Mr. Gladstone's host at

Clapham, the Rev. J. Guinness Rogers. It was forwarded by him for circulation and for signature among his English Nonconformist brethren. The tone of superiority assumed in this document over the 990 ministers and office-bearers who had signed the Irish Non-Episcopal appeal caused some amusement and not a little indignation in Ulster. It was implied in this answer that a Rev. J. Guinness Rogers and Mr. Gladstone's other English Nonconformist supporters knew more about Home Rule for Ireland than the Protestant clergy in Ireland of all the Churches. In a reply to an assertion which had been made, that the Presbyterian ministers were almost the only opponents of Home Rule amongst the Irish clergy, it was stated most truly that the appeal had been signed by all the Presbyterian clergy with some very few exceptions, and that it had also the signatures of nearly all the Unitarian, Methodist, and Baptist ministers. It was also added that all the clergy of the late Protestant Establishment concurred in the appeal, that though addressed to Nonconformists it expressed the convictions of the Protestant clergy generally whether Episcopal or Non-Episcopal. Among them there was practical unanimity. The few exceptions proved the rule. It could indeed be truly said that the Irish Presbyterian clergy opposed to Home Rule were nearly all Liberal Unionists, and the Protestant Episcopal clergy who agreed with them in deprecating this policy were for the most part Conservatives. The Rev. J. Guinness Rogers was told from Ulster that he might live safely and comfortably at Clapham, and

that neither he nor those to whom in England he sent his draft reply ran any risk from Home Rule; but that the Protestant clergy of all Ireland, Episcopal and Non-Episcopal, knew their danger, and on this question agreed with nearly all who were loyal, prosperous, and independent in the country.

Sir William Harcourt was as ignorant of Ulster as the Rev. J. Guinness Rogers. While accusing the organisers of the Convention of wishing to return to the old system of ascendency, he stated that the Convention had been inaugurated in the Carlton Club. This was also utterly contrary to the facts. The speakers at the Convention indignantly repudiated the charge that they wished to restore anything having even the appearance of ascendency; and, as we have seen, the first idea of the Convention, and even the first draft of the resolutions, originated in Belfast and from a Liberal Unionist source.

All the principal newspapers of the United Kingdom had representatives in Belfast during the week when the Convention was held. With very few exceptions indeed they bore eloquent testimony to the magnificence of the demonstration. Even the Nationalist *Freeman's Journal* wrote of this great protest of Ulster against Home Rule: "Everything passed off successfully and peacefully in Belfast yesterday. The numbers attending the series of meetings were up to the figures which were anticipated. As a demonstration against Home Rule the affair should satisfy its promoters. It was a triumph of organising skill." *United Ireland*, representing

the new Parnellite as opposed to the Anti-Parnellite section of the Nationalists, wrote in a similar strain of admiration, and has even very recently recalled to the memories of its readers what it said of the display which is now a matter of history.[1]

Little more than a week after the meeting of this Great Convention, the Parliament was dissolved. It was indeed for the purpose of influencing the constituencies by letting the British electors know what the Protestant and Unionist people of Ulster thought of Home Rule, and what under any circumstances would be their attitude to an Irish Parliament and Government, that they assembled in such imposing numbers, and with such solemn earnestness. In the Queen's Speech terminating the session and the Parliament which had existed six years, the Irish Education Act was the only Irish measure mentioned as having become law. It was said to have been framed on the same principles as the English and Scotch measures; but it was not so complete nor so satisfactory. The Catholic bishops, as had appeared, were not in favour of general and compulsory education. A compromise which can scarcely be said to have worked well was come to, and in important towns the Act has remained in abeyance.

[1] On Saturday, the 17th of March, in this year, 1895, it was written in *United Ireland*: "Nothing could have been better in a certain sense, from the Unionist point of view, than the great Unionist Convention held in Belfast just before the passing of the second Home Rule Bill. It was magnificent. But, as we pointed out at the time, it was not war. We have said that the Unionist calculations were accurate—that is, they were accurate as far as they went."

The results of the general election did not justify the sanguine anticipations of Mr. Gladstone and of Mr. Schnadhorst. Instead of the Opposition having a majority of 130, still less of 156, as had been anticipated and supported by elaborate calculations in a monthly periodical by Mr. Gladstone himself, or 170, as a little later Mr. Herbert Gladstone prophesied on what appeared to be his father's authority, there was a bare majority of forty. It could not even be said that this majority was exclusively, if at all, on the especial question of Home Rule.

Several candidates, as Gladstonians, came forward to contest Unionist seats in Ulster. They appeared under great advantages; but none of them was returned. It was noticed that none of them placed Home Rule prominently in the front. Though Mr. Gladstone and his followers in the House of Commons had recently shown themselves so hostile to a continuance and extension of Irish land purchase, his Ulster candidates were almost silent on Home Rule, and said as much as possible on the Irish land question, and especially with regard to Land Purchase. Mr. T. W. Russell repelled Mr. Thomas A. Dickson's attack in South Tyrone. Sir Thomas Lea was equally successful in defeating as a Nationalist Mr. Samuel Walker, Mr. Gladstone's last Irish Attorney-General, who had also been defeated as a Unionist by the combination already referred to of Conservatives and Nationalists in North Derry seven years before: but Mr. Walker consoled himself as a Home Ruler on this second defeat with the thought that his services in the House of Commons would

have to be dispensed with, and that he would receive the great prize of the Irish Lord Chancellorship. Mr. Dodd, since Serjeant Dodd, in North Antrim, did not as a Gladstonian poll half the number of votes given to the Unionist Mr. C. C. Connor. In the more doubtful constituency of North Tyrone, Lord Frederick Hamilton retained his seat against another Gladstonian candidate, Professor Dougherty. But the greatest of the Ulster Unionist victories was in the West Division of Belfast. There the seat was won by Mr. Arnold-Forster from Mr. Sexton, who is undoubtedly one of the ablest speakers among the Anti-Parnellite members. The Belfast Nationalists were prostrated by their defeat, and the Unionists much elated. "West Belfast," it was said, "had retrieved its disgrace, and the city could now present a united front to the common enemy."

Mr. Sexton left Belfast without publicly meeting his supporters. He found refuge in the far south of North Kerry. The Duke of Devonshire's taunt when he had visited Belfast after Mr. Gladstone had gone over to the Irish Nationalists remained true. The veteran statesman, after all his great remedial measures for Ireland, could not in that country count on a single supporter. He was dependent on the Irish Nationalists, who were able and ready to dictate to him and his colleagues their own terms. To this the great Liberal party had come.

Early in August the new Parliament was summoned to meet. The conclusion was of course foregone. The vote of no confidence was carried by the forty anticipated when the elections terminated. It was

seen, however, that Mr. Gladstone's difficulties were only beginning. Parliament was immediately afterwards prorogued, not, it was understood, to meet again until the following year, when early in February the second Home Rule Bill would be introduced.

The Unionists were not at all discouraged by the result of the general election. The Home Rule majority was very much what they had expected it would be. Mr. Chamberlain had put it at thirty; this was ten fewer than what it really was. The Ulster Convention had developed into a permanent Convention League, in which all the elaborate organisation which had extorted the admiration of the most bitter Nationalists was preserved. It was thought that no Government could undertake to carry great and even revolutionary measures with so small a majority, dependent on purely Irish Nationalist votes. The precedent of Lord Melbourne's Administration did not, it was stated, apply at all. Lord Melbourne and his colleagues, after having only a majority of ten on the Jamaica question, did resign in the February of 1839, Lord John Russell then having expressly stated that a ministry with so small a majority could not hope to legislate successfully. Sir Robert Peel was given the opportunity of forming a Government, but declined it, owing to the difference with Her Majesty on the removal of the Ladies of the Bedchamber.

In Ulster it was now generally expected that another general election could not be far distant. Doubts were expressed whether Mr. Gladstone's new

Administration would last until the end of the following year. Hence the work of registration was vigorously entered upon, and with this object a considerable sum of money was subscribed independently of the funds raised for the Convention League. There was not the excitement which prevailed in the early months of 1886, when Mr. Gladstone formed his first Home Rule Government, and there was a danger of the Bill being carried with a run. Though the local stocks showed indications of a decline, this was at first not so serious as it had been before the defeat of the former Home Rule Bill. The Unionists began to look confidently to the House of Lords for safety.

CHAPTER XVI

1892—1893

The Election Petitions in North and South Meath—Their Effect in Ulster—The Evicted Tenants Commission—The Ulster Farmers—Convention League Conferences—Great Demonstration of Working Men in Belfast—The Beginning of the Session—Enormous List of Measures—The Home Rule Bill—Thought in Ulster to be worse than the former Bill—"A small minority"—The Commercial Deputations from Belfast—The Interview with Mr. Gladstone—The Reply to Mr. Gladstone—Comparison between the Increase of the Populations of Glasgow and Belfast—Disappointment in Ulster at the Postponement of Lord Salisbury's Visit—Mr. Balfour in Belfast—Great Demonstrations—"Ulster can at all events fight"—The Coercion of Ulster Recommended by the Irish Nationalists and the British Home Rule Press.

THE trial of the election petitions in North and South Meath, with Bishop Nulty's pastoral, showed that the most determined ecclesiastical influence could be used even in favour of one section of Nationalists and against another. Mr. Timothy Healy, though he had not regarded the Pope's admonitions respecting the Land League, as an advocate sought to justify the pretension now set up that the voting for or against Nationalist candidates, and all other

candidates, became a question of faith and morals. Catholic bishops publicly maintained this principle, even in Ulster, not the least of them being one supposed to be moderate, the Catholic Primate of Armagh. His declaration was strongly commented upon by the Unionists. "See," it was said, "what Ireland would be under Home Rule."

The Evicted Tenants Commission sat in Dublin late in the autumn. It cannot be said that among the Ulster farmers, who had continued regularly to pay their rents, the proceedings of the Commission, any more than the authoritative pretensions of the Catholic bishops to direct the votes of their people, met with the least approval. The general opinion was that those misguided tenants who had lent themselves to the seductions of the organisers of the Plan of Campaign had brought their punishment on themselves. At the prospect, however, of legislation in favour of those wounded soldiers of the campaign, a number of Home Rule farmers near Newtownards, in Down, began to talk of following the example of the evicted tenants and of not paying their rents, under the belief that they would have a claim on Parliament for relief by the measure Mr. Morley was expected to introduce. They were, however, warned that they might be calculating without their host, and that, with an Evicted Tenants Act or without an Evicted Tenants Act, they would do well, as honest men, to continue to fulfil their obligations.

Notwithstanding, too, the Nationalist boasts that the people had become law-abiding because they had

a sympathetic Government, on Christmas Eve, in Exchange Court, Dublin, a detective policeman was blown to pieces by dynamite. One of his arms was said to have been driven through the window of the Irish Chief Secretary's library in the Castle. At this Christmas time some indignation was felt by the Ulster Unionists that the dynamitards Callan and Egan had been released, and that, just as the unfortunate policeman was blown up in Dublin, the men who were, whether truly or not, supposed to have battered in Inspector Martin's skull and danced on his prostrate body, were being sent with considerate kindness to their Donegal homes, to be in time to spend Christmas Day with their families.

As the year closed, in anticipation of the meeting of Parliament, it was stated that another Unionist conference would be held in Belfast during the third week of the following January. This meeting was preceded by one in Enniskillen, and succeeded by others in most of the Unionist districts of Ulster. They were all under the auspices of the Convention League, which, in expectation of the introduction of the new Home Rule Bill, showed that it was a power with which any Government would have to reckon.

The Belfast demonstration was of course the greatest. It was avowedly composed of working men. They amounted to some ten thousand, a number which it was quite impossible to accommodate in the large Ulster Hall. An overflow meeting was being held at the same time in the Minor hall; but even it could not hold many who were

anxious to take part in the proceedings. The Nationalist Press had, as usual, stated that the Convention was only a landlords' organisation. The large majority of the working men of Belfast were anxious to show that they were as much opposed to Home Rule as their chairman, Lord Londonderry. That nobleman had, previous to the assembly, been entertained by Mr. Thomas Andrews, President of the Ulster Liberal Unionist Association, at the Ulster Reform Club. He continued to take a most active part in opposition to the Home Rule movement. At all these meetings, which were of a most enthusiastic character, the determination not to accept the new Home Rule Bill, in the spirit of the resolutions passed at the Convention, was very emphatically declared.

It had been reported that before Mr. Gladstone had gone to Biarritz he had left in typewriting copies of the Bill for the consideration of his colleagues until his return. However this may have been, nothing was known of its provisions, except that, just at the time of the Belfast meeting, Sir Charles Russell stated that the measure would differ from the former one in allowing the Irish members, not only to have a domestic Parliament of their own, but to sit and vote at Westminster on all Imperial questions. Mr. Gladstone was about to undertake what seven years before he had declared to be beyond the wit of man. At these Ulster meetings, however, all the speakers, from Lord Londonderry himself, declared that so far from this change being an improvement in the new

Home Rule Bill, it would make it worse than its predecessor.

Parliament met on the last day of January. Contrary to anticipation, the Home Rule Bill did not occupy the most prominent place in the list of measures in the Royal Speech. It was not even called a Home Rule Bill at all, nor anything like it, but a measure to amend the provisions for the government of Ireland. Nothing could be apparently more innocent. Nothing was said about the evicted tenants, but it was understood that, after the report of Mr. Justice Mathew and his colleagues, a measure for their relief would be introduced. As it was, the long list of measures announced could only be read with amazement. There were to be a British Registration Bill, a Bill for shortening the duration of Parliaments, another for restricting each elector to one vote, Bills dealing with the condition of labour, among which was a measure with regard to employers' liabilities, another limiting the hours of railway servants, and one amending the law of conspiracy. As though these were not enough, Bills for dealing with local government, establishing Parish Councils, enlarging the powers of the London County Council, preventing the creation of new vested interests in the Ecclesiastical Establishments of Scotland and Wales, giving direct local control over the liquor traffic, "together with other measures of public utility," were all gravely mentioned as to be the legislative work of the session. It seemed scarcely credible that a ministry could seriously expect such

a tremendous list of Bills, some of them of a most contentious and revolutionary character, to be carried or even discussed in a single session. It was obviously the beginning of a new system in which, as was said, immediately afterwards in Ulster, different sections of the supporters of the Government were to be bribed by the mention of Bills which there was no intention of passing. In so many words it was stated: "The Government appear to minimise the Irish Home Rule question, and thus to make a parade of British measures, for which the country is quite unprepared, and most of which cannot be carried this session nor in several sessions."

But, to show that he meant business, on the first night Mr. Gladstone announced that on Monday, the 6th of February, he would ask for leave to introduce the Bill for the better government of Ireland. It was not however until Monday, the 13th of February, he developed his new plan of Irish Home Rule in the House of Commons. It involved the creation of a Legislative Council of elected members, and an Executive Council of the Privy Council. New Irish constituencies were to be formed. But as Mr. Gladstone spoke it seemed difficult to understand how many councils and what new elective constituencies were to be called into existence. Irish members were to sit in the House of Commons at Westminster, at first it seemed in their full strength of a hundred and three, because the Prime Minister said every representative ought to be on an equality. After having established this proposition

he announced that it was not to be acted upon, but that eighty members were to represent Ireland in the British or Imperial Parliament. They were not, however, to vote on especially British questions. While making this announcement the Prime Minister allowed it to be understood that he was not particularly favourable to it, evidently preferring, as in his former Bill, the total exclusion of the Irish members from the House of Commons. He went into an academical discussion on the question and on the representation of minorities, more worthy of a professor than of the most experienced of British statesmen. It was intimated that proposals for domestic Parliaments with similar arrangements for representation at Westminster were contemplated for Wales, Scotland, and even parts of England. The financial arrangements, those dealing with the customs revenue and with the police, were all apparently different from the proposals in the former measure, and, though in a veiled form, appeared to concede all the Irish Nationalist demands. The Lord Lieutenant was to hold office for six years. He was to exercise the Queen's veto subject to Her Majesty's instructions on especial Bills, under the advice of the Executive Council, who would be the Irish ministers controlled by the Irish Parliament. The Legislative Council was intended, it was said, to protect the minorities, and to be formed of forty-eight representatives chosen by a twenty-pound rating franchise.

Looking at the Bill from their own point of view, the Ulster Unionists agreed unanimously that where

the measure differed from the former one it differed for the worse. The more it became known, the less it was liked. The series of negatives with which the Bill began, saying that the Irish Legislature shall not, instead of shall, provoked much ridicule. The Irish Legislature was not to interfere with denominational institutions. The Irish Legislature was not to restrict nor impede the supreme authority of Parliament. These words were easily said; but there was nothing to prevent them from being disregarded. Though the Queen might give instructions respecting the exercise of her royal veto on certain Bills, it was not provided that her Majesty would exercise her prerogative under the advice of the British Government subject to the approval of the British Parliament. If this were really intended it virtually meant the re-enactment of Poyning's Law. On all the other negatives, about the succession to the Crown, the regency, peace and war, there seemed similar disingenuity. But one of the last negatives was the most extraordinary of all. It was said that "the power of the Irish Parliament was not to extend to the making of any law whereby any person may be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law, or without any just compensation." With respect to this qualification it was said in Belfast: "This is worthy of the Spanish brigand who takes his hat off and makes a sign of the cross as he passes a church. Was it ever before gravely proposed to be declared in so many words by a Parliament dating back from the earliest ages of English

history, that in a new Legislature members were not to commit murder, not to rob, not to take property without due process of law, not to interfere with protection by equal laws, and, again, not to take private property without due compensation? It is considered necessary by Mr. Gladstone, it seems, and his colleagues in the Act which is to establish this Irish Parliament, to state that the Ten Commandments are not to be abolished."

To this and a great deal of similar criticism the measure as it became known in its details was exposed. In creating the new constituencies for the eighty representatives not even an attempt was made to redress the scandalous inequalities of the actual representation. They were even increased by taking away the members from Dublin University. Of the forty-eight members to be elected under the new schedule to the Legislative Council with the twenty-pound rating qualification, only some eight or ten at most could be returned for Ulster. Even on the assumption, which could not be regarded as a fact, that those all represented the industrious, loyal, and prosperous part of the province, there could be no check on the other councillors in the South and West, who, it was seen, with scarcely any exception, would be Nationalists. The small and decaying boroughs, which have been before referred to, were to continue to nullify the representation of Belfast and other large constituencies. The financial part of the scheme excited no interest whatever, except as it was evident that it would produce bankruptcy to the new Irish Government.

It was remarked that in introducing the Bill, and in all the discussions on it at this time, the Prime Minister had, as usual, not a friendly word to say of Ulster. There was no longer any pretence of offering the Unionists of the North-East a separate government, even after Mr. Gladstone had spoken of giving separate domestic Legislatures to Scotland, Wales, and even to different parts of England. Though, according to his own admission, they amounted to considerably more than a million, and indeed if fairly counted to a million and a half, or a third of the Irish people, he called the Unionists a small minority. The Prime Minister's manner was thought, and justly thought, to be more offensive to Ulster than his language. It was then and afterwards, as will soon be seen, the reverse of conciliatory.

The first association to express an emphatic condemnation of the Bill was composed of Mr. Gladstone's old supporters, the large majority of the Ulster Liberals. On the Friday after the introduction of the measure, and before the printed copy had been received, the Executive Committee of the Liberal Unionist Association met and passed a series of resolutions condemning it as more unfair in its provisions than the former Bill. In the following week various Anti-Home Rule associations began to move: the Executive Committee of the Convention League, the Conservative Association, the Ulster Reform Club. Steps were taken to request the Mayor of Belfast to summon a public meeting. The Chamber of Commerce and the Harbour Board

were also preparing to send deputations to London. Some foolish schemes were suggested. One was to despatch a deputation of five thousand delegates to Mr. Gladstone. It was pointed out, however, that he would almost certainly refuse to receive such a number of representatives of the Convention League, or of any newly-chosen associations called together for such a purpose. It was also proposed to hold a mass meeting of Ulster Unionists in Trafalgar Square. This, too, was represented as impracticable, and even dangerous. The suggestion which found the most favour was to send a large number of delegates to the Alexandra Hall, and thus to let it be seen in London what kind of persons the Ulster Unionists were.

The people continued to keep very quiet. They had the utmost confidence in themselves. From Belfast the movement was directed throughout all Ulster. Lord Salisbury intimated his willingness to come to the new city and to Londonderry about the end of March, and steps were immediately taken to make as imposing a demonstration during his visit as the recent Convention had been.

But while the arrangements for a great demonstration of Unionists in Lord Salisbury's presence were being carried out, the deputations from the Belfast Chamber of Commerce, the Harbour Commissioners, and the Linen Merchants' Association went to London to have an interview with the Prime Minister. Mr. Gladstone consented to receive these representatives. An extremely able report on the

commercial aspects of the Government of Ireland Bill had been drawn up by the Chamber of Commerce and forwarded to him from the deputations previous to the interview. As a matter of convenience, and especially to spare Mr. Gladstone's time, it was arranged that they should go together to No. 10, Downing Street. Noon on Thursday, the 27th of March, was the appointed hour. Mr. Gladstone entered the room eight minutes late, and, pulling out his watch, said that he had another deputation to receive at one. Though he had stipulated that the interview was to be conversational, it soon appeared that he was in no listening mood. When Mr. Greenhill, the President of the Chamber of Commerce, began by stating that he represented a non-political body, he was interrupted by the Prime Minister with the remark, "Almost entirely Protestant, I think."

"Largely, but not entirely so," said the President. Mr. Gladstone replied, "Only eight Catholics to 260 Protestants." The members of the deputation and of the other deputations heard this statement from the Prime Minister with amazement. It had never occurred to them to consider the Chamber of Commerce from a sectarian point of view. There was no election to it; there was no exclusion from it. The large majority of members were doubtless Protestants, and for the simple reason that there were very few eminent Catholic merchants. Those could almost be counted on the fingers. It was evident that Mr. Gladstone had been well coached by somebody. He interrupted Mr. Greenhill ten times in fewer

than ten minutes, and was afterwards with great difficulty prevailed upon by Sir Edward Harland to listen to a few words from Mr. Thomas Sinclair, who had been his most influential Presbyterian supporter in Belfast. When Mr. Sinclair began to emphasise the various points of the memorial he was again and again interrupted. Mr. Gladstone said that he had read the document carefully and did not want to hear anything more on the subject. Mr. Sinclair placed in the impatient statesman's hands a document showing that in the five weeks since the introduction of the Home Rule Bill the value of the shares in seven Irish banks had been depreciated £938,000, and in seven Irish railways a million. This made Mr. Gladstone still more impatient. He then began to speak himself, and spoke for forty-four minutes. His remarks were for the most part of a vague, general, and historical character, with which the representations made to him in the memorial, and in the few observations to which he could be induced to listen, had scarcely anything to do.

After Mr. Gladstone had finished, it was with great difficulty that Mr. James Musgrave, the Chairman of the Harbour Board, was able to get in a few words. Mr. Musgrave, as he told Mr. Gladstone, represented a Presbyterian family which had suffered in the old times from the Episcopalian ascendency: "but we could not," he said, "be angry for ever. We have to do with what is occurring in our own day." He told Mr. Gladstone that at the time when the Act of Union became law, the number of vessels entering

the Belfast Harbour was 777, with a tonnage of 55,268, and that last year the number of vessels amounted to 8,304, with a tonnage of 2,053,637. Mr. Adam Duffin, himself too, as he said, belonging to a family impressed with the traditions of United Ireland a century before, informed the Prime Minister that he was still more strongly impressed with the conditions under which the people were then living. Mr. Crawford, a large linen manufacturer and representing the Belfast Linen Merchants' Association, was not allowed to speak. In the course of his address Mr. Gladstone proposed that the deputation should forward to him from Belfast, a reply to his arguments. On being reminded of this suggestion he agreed to it, and bowed the three deputations out. When the door was shut upon them, these Belfast gentlemen, representing such large industries, looked in one another's faces and laughed. Their first step afterwards was to telegraph to Belfast: "Deputations a farce." They had afterwards an interview with Mr. Balfour, who received them with much sympathy.

As soon as they returned to Belfast they set about preparing their reply to Mr. Gladstone's speech. It was very carefully drawn up, extremely able, and indeed unanswerable. Mr. Gladstone had questioned the statement that the amount of money collected by the Customs Department of Belfast was then two millions, three hundred and seventy-six thousand, five hundred and eleven pounds, and by the Inland Revenue Department nine hundred thousand pounds more, making in all more than three millions,

two hundred and seventy-six thousand pounds. The official returns from the Board of Inland Revenue were obtained and quoted against Mr. Gladstone, signed by the secretary of that department, Mr. Micks, in Somerset House. The Prime Minister had even depreciated the rapid increase of the population of Belfast, and compared it disadvantageously with that of Glasgow. Here again the reply appeared conclusive and triumphant. It showed that the estimated population of Belfast in 1802 was 19,000, and that it was in 1892 275,000. In 1801 Glasgow had a population of 83,701, and in 1891 the increase had been to 658,198. It seemed rather unfair to subject Belfast to the test of Glasgow, the most populous town of the United Kingdom out of London. But in the reply of the Chamber of Commerce to Mr. Gladstone it was shown that the new Ulster city could fully stand the test. Belfast in the years since the Act of Union had multiplied its population thirteen and a half times, Glasgow but eight times. These were the returns quoted.

The only comfort the unfortunate Belfast deputations had on being so thoroughly rebuked by Mr. Gladstone was that, as they soon learnt, the next deputation of merchants and bankers of London immediately afterwards had been almost as cavalierly treated. To these representatives of commerce he said again and again that the propertied classes, a remarkable and not very accurate phrase, would now have to submit to be governed by the non-propertied classes. When the reports of the two

interviews appeared side by side in the columns of the newspapers it was at once written and published in Belfast: "If they who have no property are to govern the propertied classes, the House of Lords cannot have a right to exist. The Upper House on this principle ought to be abolished. Mr. Gladstone, through his Radical and Nationalist supporters, is already striking at the House of Lords." The author of those observations did not suspect how very soon Mr. Gladstone would make good this prophecy and strike at the House of Lords himself. When the Prime Minister was so indignant with the Chamber of Commerce and the other Commercial Associations of Belfast, he surely was aware that the Dublin Chamber of Commerce was also opposed to his Home Rule policy. Not long afterwards the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce too adopted the Belfast representation against the Home Rule Bill, with all the great commercial corporations of the United Kingdom. There seemed no especial reason why Belfast through its various representatives should have been received, to say the least, not very courteously. The Irish General Assembly was, however, worse treated by the illustrious statesman than even the Belfast commercial deputations. He had made the most of the Nonconformists of England who had adopted his Home Rule views. Any Irish clergyman who could assure him of having the same sympathies was certain to be complimented. But the deputation from the Irish General Assembly, which was practically unanimous in opposition to

the second Home Rule Bill, was even refused an interview.

In all this, it may be said without any intentional disrespect, there was much temper but little statesmanship. Impatient of the opposition given to his new measure, Mr. Gladstone appeared to have utterly lost the invaluable faculty of seeing more than one side of a great question which affected so deeply the hearts and understandings of the whole Unionist population in Ireland.

The more he appeared to rebuke them, the more they continued the organisation of their forces of resistance. Unionist clubs were being established in all the Parliamentary districts of Ulster where circumstances admitted. Many of them were placed in correspondence with Unionist organisations in British constituencies. At the same time the Catholic noblemen, country gentlemen, merchants, and professional men, signed a most weighty petition against the Bill, and some of the most influential of them in Ulster were ready to welcome Lord Salisbury on his expected visit to Belfast on the Tuesday in the Easter week, while the Home Rule Bill was still awaiting its second reading in the House of Commons.

There was, however, a second disappointment. The marquis had an attack of influenza, and by the advice of his physicians had to postpone his Ulster engagement. After Mr. Balfour's failure to pay his promised visit in the preceding year, there was great irritation where there had been such preparations in the spirit of the Great Convention to make before

Lord Salisbury an elaborately organised Unionist demonstration. The Easter Tuesday, April the 4th, it was felt, could not be permitted to pass without allowing the people to have their long-expected political holiday. Such good intentions, such earnestness, such enthusiasm, could not be allowed to end in nothing.

It was suggested that Mr. Balfour should be requested to take his uncle's place. He had to meet the Unionists in Dublin later in the week: it could not be difficult for him to come round by Belfast, not only as a substitute for Lord Salisbury, but in redemption of his former promise. This Mr. Balfour at last agreed to do.

He arrived in Belfast by the Stranraer and Larne route. He only, however, drove through the city to Mountstewart, where, as he reminded the Town Commissioners of Newtownards, who presented him with a complimentary address, he had been, when Irish Chief Secretary, Lord Londonderry's guest.

The following day, on a beautiful spring morning, he returned to Belfast to witness a remarkable sight. A platform had been erected before the Linen Hall in Donegall Square, and facing Donegall Place, memorials of a noble family to which, owing to the liberal leases they gave a century ago, Belfast owes so much of its progress. From this platform Mr. Balfour witnessed an impressive march-past which had been intended for the Marquis of Salisbury.

Between the meeting of the Convention on the 17th of the past June and the demonstration in the

following April there was a great difference. At the Convention there was no outward demonstration. The display was only in the enormous number of the people themselves. Now the demonstration was of all the various Unionist organisations in Ulster which had been called into action by the Convention. There were also the representatives of all the public bodies of Belfast, the students of the Queen's College, of the Presbyterian College, and of Trinity College more or less connected with Ulster, members of the Scottish Club, of the Unionist clubs which had recently been called into existence, of the Benefit Societies, and of course the Orange lodges of Belfast and all the Ulster counties. Such a display the city had never before seen. From the platform, erected by subscription, all along the great thoroughfare of Donegall Place and down to the new Royal Avenue, there was one vast sea of heads. The crowds were so great that even the Lord Mayor's carriage, in which Mr. Balfour sat, could scarcely make its way. The reception was something which all who witnessed it declared they had never seen paralleled.

On the platform for four hours, the late Irish Chief Secretary was, with uncovered head, loudly applauded as the various bodies, most of them with bands and banners, filed past. A copy of the Home Rule Bill was burnt publicly and stamped upon amid great cheering. The more prominent persons in the long procession were singled out and individually applauded, particularly Mr. Sinclair and Mr. Musgrave, who, as representatives of the Belfast Chamber

of Commerce and the Harbour Board, were thought to have been not very well treated by Mr. Gladstone at the recent interview. On leaving Mr. Balfour and the distinguished company on the platform, the processionists wended their way through the crowds to the Botanic Gardens, where five platforms had been erected, and speeches were made by representative men as during the afternoon of the Convention.

In the evening Mr. Balfour addressed a large audience in the Ulster Hall. Hitherto in that great building, since the Unionist question became urgent, the principal public men who had appeared at the public meetings were mostly Liberal Unionists: the Duke of Devonshire, Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Wolmer, and Sir Henry James. Now, after painful disappointments, the Conservatives had to address them a most distinguished statesman of their own party, whose Irish administration, under great difficulties, had been a great success. They therefore naturally, under such circumstances, made the most of their opportunity. Mr. Balfour's concluding words were applauded to the echo. They were: "I shall go back to my work in the House of Commons strengthened by the strong convictions I have obtained to-day of what Ulster is, and what Ulster means. And depend upon it, that if the British people can only have it brought home to their minds what Ulster is, and what Ulster means, not all the forces arrayed against you can prevail against righteousness and justice in the end."

The next afternoon Mr. Balfour's visit to Belfast

was brought to a termination by a luncheon given to him and a distinguished company by the Lord Mayor in the Exhibition Hall of the Botanic Gardens. He was again most enthusiastically greeted. He concluded his speech even in still more emphatic terms than on the previous evening in the Ulster Hall. He afterwards left to fulfil his engagement in Dublin. There his visit continued until the end of the week. It was watched with much interest by the Unionists whom he had left in the North, and who continued more energetically than ever their work of organising the Ulster Defence Union with an intended Assembly of six hundred. One remarkable sentence in the last speech he delivered in Dublin on the Saturday evening excited much attention in Ulster, and was everywhere quoted. It was in the following terms: "I turn to the position which the minority will occupy if the measure be passed: if it ever be passed, Ulster can at all events fight: the last refuge of brave men struggling for their freedom cannot be denied them." That Ulster meant to fight in the event of the Home Rule Bill then becoming law was beyond all doubt. That Ulster still means to fight rather than submit to an Irish Parliament, in which the Unionists would always be in a hopeless minority, and have at all times their most cherished convictions outraged and their material interests treated as of no account, can scarcely be disputed by any independent and impartial observer thoroughly acquainted with the province.

Mr. O'Brien at Cork said in anticipation of the visit

that Mr. Balfour deserved a plank bed, Mr. William O'Brien having had great experience in plank beds. At the same time *United Ireland*, the newspaper which Mr. O'Brien had himself recently edited, and in which he had published the Plan of Campaign, wrote of the threats of hypothetical resistance : "The longer Mr. Morley delays in taking action against men who are working for a repetition of the scenes of 1886, the more deplorable will be the ultimate result." "Their action," it added, "is aimed at the law of the land and the stability and integrity of the State. It is therefore treasonable." Here was seen *United Ireland* anxious for the assertion of the law of the land, the stability and integrity of the State, and the prohibition of Unionist speeches and demonstrations as treasonable. This language was of course republished in Ulster, and was read by the Unionists with amazement. But Home Rule English newspapers used very much the same language. After Mr. Balfour's visit, the *Manchester Guardian* published an article, which was also quoted in *United Ireland*, declaring that Mr. Balfour was engaged in the nefarious work of exciting the religious animosities of the Ulster Protestants, and in an extra-Parliamentary agitation in a corner of the United Kingdom to void the deliberate decision of the whole electorate. A letter was quoted in the article of the Manchester newspaper, and requoted in *United Ireland*, from a correspondent, Mr. Page Hopps, who said : "The more the minority threaten and scream, the more clear it is that they need the lessons and discipline

of Home Rule. The more they declare that they will not meet the majority for consultation concerning the common good, the more obvious it is *that they must be made to do so.*"

In answer to these menaces it was said in Ulster: "If this be not coercion, what is it? It certainly looks very much like coercion, and excessive coercion." To coercion indeed, to which Home Rule had been so often stated to be the alternative, the Home Rulers were themselves evidently coming. They were making up their minds to coerce the Unionists in Ulster, "not because," it was said, "the Unionist minority wish to separate from the Imperial Government and Parliament, but because they wish to remain under the protection of both, and because they refuse to be handed over to an Irish Nationalist Government of lawbreakers, who would be in the power of the most lawless, ignorant, and disaffected populace and peasantry, and who would in the end be compelled by them and the American Irish to adopt a policy of complete separation."

Coercion was in the air. The Government, on the Monday after Mr. Balfour's visit to Belfast, published a prohibition against the importation of arms into Ireland. Yet Ulster was exceptionally quiet, while in the South there were serious disturbances from the dissensions between the two parties of Nationalists, and the police had vigorously to interfere to protect impartially both sides from the violence of each other. I may say unhesitatingly, but most deli-

berately, that of all the delusions in which the mind of a British statesman ever indulged, the belief that Home Rule in Ireland would be an alternative to coercion was, and is, the most preposterous. I have no more doubt with respect to this fact than I have of my own existence. Never before has it been seriously proposed by a Government of the Queen, nor any other Government, to place the loyal in the power of the disaffected: the wealthier, educated, professional, and more industrious classes under their social inferiors, the comparatively ignorant, the comparatively idle: they who were attached to the Crown and to the Empire under those who made no secret that their ultimate object was national independence, which could sooner or later have only one logical and practical result—absolute separation.

CHAPTER XVII

1893—1894

The Debate on the Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill—Mr. Davitt's Speech—Contributions to the Revenue by Dublin and Belfast—The Albert Hall Demonstration—The Monday at Hatfield—Disturbances in Belfast—Exaggerated Statements—Home Rule Bill in Committee—Lord Salisbury's Visit to Belfast—The Ulster Settlements and Lord Salisbury's Ancestors—The Union Jack in Derry—The Ninth Clause of the Home Rule Bill—The Third Reading—The Rejection by the House of Lords—How the News was Received in Ulster—The Duke of Devonshire's Last Visit to Belfast—Mr. Gladstone's Resignation and Retirement.

THE debate on the second reading of the Home Rule Bill began on the Monday after Mr. Balfour's Irish visit. It was not until the Friday night of the following week, April 21st, that a division was taken, and the motion carried by a majority of forty-three. The debate had scarcely any new features and was not especially interesting. Mr. Michael Davitt's appearance as a speaker was indeed an event which was regarded as a novelty. He had been unseated on petition for South Meath, but afterwards was returned for East Cork. He argued that Dublin was richer than Belfast because it showed a much larger

income-tax return. This was a fallacy which Mr. Healy had put in circulation some years before, and which had been exposed in Mr. Gladstone's presence. Dublin is the seat of the Government, of the Lord Lieutenancy, of the great public offices, of the law courts, of the military and constabulary headquarters. These are all metropolitan advantages withheld from Belfast, and they of course largely increase the Dublin returns. The three great railway companies pay their income-tax in Dublin. Mr. Gladstone had admitted the misleading character of the figures before they were repeated by Mr. Davitt, but he was observed to smile approvingly at some of Mr. Davitt's comparisons to the disadvantage of Belfast and Ulster.

Mr. Davitt's statements that the Great Convention was a landlords' organisation, and that the money subscribed to the funds of the Convention League only came from the higher classes, were equally unfounded. The number of delegates attending the Convention has already been given. But the actual number chosen, of whom many, however, had been prevented from being present by various causes, was, in answer, stated to be 12,330. Of these more than 5,600 were tenant farmers and 2,500 agricultural labourers. The subscription lists then being published in the Ulster newspapers afforded the most unequivocal evidence that the money raised for the Convention League and the Defence Union was not contributed by the wealthier classes only. Such unjustifiable assertions as Mr. Davitt made when reading his maiden speech

from a manuscript in the House of Commons deserve to be exposed. They had frequently been before uttered and continue to be often repeated. Nothing was said by Mr. Davitt about the valuation of Belfast, nor about the Customs and Excise returns, which were far beyond those of Dublin. The Irish Nationalists at one time most inconsistently represent Dublin and the South as having been almost ruined by the Union, and at another as far more prosperous than Belfast and the North of Ireland.

On the evening of the close of the debate on the second reading of the Home Rule Bill, a large number of the Unionist deputation of twelve hundred who attended the Albert Hall demonstration were present about the House of Commons. They not very becomingly made Mr. Gladstone the object of a hostile greeting, at which he appeared somewhat surprised and disconcerted. It was not what he had been accustomed to: but it showed the depth of feeling on the great question of the Union to which the twelve hundred delegates had come from Ireland the day before to show their adhesion in the Albert Hall. That great Saturday's demonstration surprised a large number of people in London who looked on Home Rule from an abstract point of view, and were only then convinced that the Irish Unionists, who were threatened with coercion, were of flesh and blood like themselves, as well as fellow subjects and fellow citizens.

The Unionists showed themselves thoroughly united. The Earl of Fingall spoke in the Albert

Hall as a Catholic; but his language scarcely in any respect differed from that of the accomplished Protestant Bishop of Derry and the conciliatory Duke of Abercorn. On the next Monday the delegates attended a garden-party at Hatfield, a time-honoured edifice which, with the Marquis of Salisbury himself, seemed to link the age of Queen Elizabeth with the age of Queen Victoria.

While they were at this reception at Hatfield the Lord Mayor of Belfast and Mr. Wolff, the second partner in the great shipbuilding firm of Harland and Wolff, were by telegraph suddenly recalled to Belfast. It was stated that riots had again broken out in the town, as they did seven years before after the second reading of Mr. Gladstone's former Home Rule Bill.

During the Thursday and Friday before the division on the measure, it was noticed that there was considerable excitement among the workpeople, and especially among the boys and girls as they returned home from the manufactories and warehouses. Early on the Saturday morning there were some stones thrown, and in the evening bonfires were lighted in the Catholic quarter of Carrick-hill in celebration of the second reading of the Home Rule Bill. These were regarded by some of the lower classes of Protestants as a defiance, and they were with difficulty prevented from forcing their way to them through the cordon of police. Nothing which could be considered serious occurred until after eleven o'clock, when the plate-glass windows of a public-

house were broken by stones, the doors forced open, and the whisky was consumed by the mob before the police reached the spot, just as an attempt was being made to set fire to one of the window-frames.

Sunday was quiet. But on the Monday morning it was announced that the Catholics in Messrs. Harland and Wolff's shipyard and in others were prevented from working and had been driven out. A force of police as well as a company of soldiers were sent down to the gates. Some stones were thrown, some heads broken; and the Protestant workmen on their way home marched through the town singing "God save the Queen." No person was seriously injured. Some of the Catholic workers had been escorted to their dwellings by Protestants. The more respectable inhabitants, even of the Shankhill-road district, which had seven years before been the scene of such serious disturbances, united to maintain order. Every attempt at rioting was discountenanced and suppressed.

Most exaggerated accounts of what had occurred were published in the Nationalist and Home Rule newspapers. Mr. Sexton assumed them to be true, and on the Monday afternoon in the House of Commons questioned the Home Secretary on the subject. Mr. Asquith's answer appeared to confirm Mr. Sexton's, of course unintentional, exaggerations. On the Tuesday evening, however, he read a telegram from Mr. Morley, who was in Dublin, giving a very subdued version of what had taken place. The telegram

began by stating that the injuries received by men assembled at the Queen's Island shipyards were only slight blows, that it was the presence of the police and soldiers which had been resented by the Protestant workers, that protection to Catholic workers had not been claimed because it had not been found necessary. The rivet boys had been the principal disturbers of the peace in the shipyards, and the girls in the mills. The aspect of affairs on Tuesday was declared by the Irish Chief Secretary to be distinctly favourable. "The inhabitants of the Shankhill-road, the Protestant quarter," Mr. Morley telegraphed, "have called a meeting to arrange for the preservation of the peace to-night in conjunction with the police." This sentence was cheered when read in the House of Commons; but it made some of the Nationalists not at all pleased with the Irish Chief Secretary, whom they had regarded as their subservient instrument.

Mr. Morley had accepted very wisely the account of the disturbances from the Belfast City Commissioner, Mr. Singleton, a very intelligent and esteemed police officer. Mr. Wolff, on arriving from London, addressed the men in the shipyard, declaring firmly that he and all the partners in the firm were resolved to keep the Catholics in their employment, and afford them protection. A similar statement was made by the Messrs. Ewart in their linen manufactory. Dr. Kane, Grand Master of the Orangemen of Belfast, wrote an admirable letter discountenancing all disturbances. The four members for Belfast also published under their joint signatures an earnest ap-

peal to the good sense and patriotism of the Unionists to avoid disputes with their political opponents, and to do all they could to preserve the peace.

On the Thursday the town began to assume its ordinarily quiet appearance. The gathering of the boys and mill girls at the street corners, always a sign of disorder, ceased. The workmen went quietly to their homes in the evening without any defiant parade. There were really no riots: the riots had been prevented by the resolute action of the people themselves. As a fact, there were disturbances in Cork, Skibbereen, and from the Nationalist quarter, the Bogside, in Londonderry, quite as serious as anything which occurred in Belfast during the four days after the second reading of the second Home Rule Bill.

It is, however, but fair to say that the man to whom most credit was due for the prevention of a repetition of the Belfast riots was Mr. Morley himself. By adopting the statements of Mr. Commissioner Singleton and other officials, instead of lending an ear to extreme and unauthentic Nationalist assertions, he showed a conciliatory spirit, for which he received credit from the Unionists, who began to entertain for him a more friendly feeling than when seven years before the police were denounced as Morley's murderers. His conduct was now acknowledged to be independent, impartial, and statesmanlike. Though it did not please the Nationalists, it had a most pacific effect.

Before, however, the end of the week, when there

was not the least disturbance nor appearance of disturbance in Belfast, Mr. Sexton renewed his questions. He quoted from statements made by Catholic Nationalists in Belfast and the Catholic Bishop of the diocese, whom he said had stated four facts. Mr. Morley adhered to the reply he had already given, and added that three of the four facts given by the Bishop were wrong. Sensational telegrams had been forged from some of the Unionist deputies who had not yet returned to Ulster. Two Home Rule Liberal newspapers, one of them published in London, gave sensational descriptions of riots, of which those whose duty it was to sit and write almost in the immediate neighbourhood, and the reporters of the local newspapers, had never heard. The Home Rule Liberal Press in England made even more exaggerated statements about these alleged riots than the Irish Nationalist organs themselves. On the day after Mr. Sexton had put his last question to Mr. Morley, and had from him and also from Mr. Arnold-Forster virtually unanswerable rejoinders, one of the London Home Rule morning newspapers said: "Civil and religious liberty is one of the maxims of the Liberal party. In Belfast bigots, if they try to abolish it from that portion of the kingdom, will find to their cost that so long as a Liberal Government is in office, their efforts will be promptly met and rightly punished. But is it well to blame the ignorant Protestant *employés* for the events of this week? No, the blame rather lies with such men as the Most Noble the Marquis of Salisbury, and Right Honourables

bearing the names of Balfour, Chamberlain, Devonshire, Atkinson, and Churchill, who have for some time not hesitated to preach rebellion, passive or otherwise. All the rioting in Belfast will not cause Liberals to deviate from their path one iota."

This language, and a great deal more which might be quoted, was naturally read with much indignation by all the respectable Unionists of Belfast, who, both Liberal and Conservative, had done their utmost to maintain the peace of the town, and had succeeded in their efforts. This dreadful rioting consisted at first in the public-house having been broken into and liquor consumed when the attention of the police had been drawn off on the Saturday night. Some windows too had been smashed, and on the following Monday a few heads broken in a single bâton charge of the police. There had also been some bolts thrown by the black gang, the rivet boys with blackened faces, from the Queen's Island. This was all. Not a single life was lost. Not a serious case, nor indeed any case at all from rioting, had required the attention of the medical authorities in the Royal Hospital.

Against what was going on during the same time in the South of Ireland the Nationalist assailants of Belfast had not a word to say. Systematic boycotting still continued. A farmer of the name of Quirke in County Limerick had had his house entered by a gang of moonlighters, and was very severely beaten. They had thence gone to the house of his son, and shot him in the legs. In County Clare Mr. William

Blood, J.P., whose life had been twice before attempted, had three revolver shots fired at him, while the police under whose protection he was were following him in a trap. On the Saturday night of the same week, on the anniversary of the Phœnix Park murders, an explosion occurred at the Four Courts in Dublin as alarming as the blowing to pieces of the policeman on Christmas Eve. But the Chief Secretary and the Lord Chancellor were called upon to prosecute the Unionists, who were enrolling themselves to elect the Assembly of six hundred from whom the council of forty was to be chosen to watch over their cause in Ulster. Similar organisations were being formed in other parts of Ireland. The Nationalists declared them to be little less than treasonable, while not a word was said against Mr. Redmond's army of independence or about the Southern and Dublin outrages.

The Marquis of Salisbury, too, having agreed on his recovery to fulfil his engagement to visit the North of Ireland, was declared to be desirous of encouraging the Unionists to resist the Home Rule Bill. He was also threatened with plank beds and worse than plank beds. That any language used by Unionist statesmen had anything to do with the slight popular effervescence in Belfast may be most decidedly denied. But the Nationalist leaders had, from Mr. Parnell downwards, encouraged boycotting and the non-payment of rents except on certain conditions. Many of those members who wished the Unionists to be prosecuted had themselves been judicially

condemned for what was undoubtedly an encouragement to disobedience to the law. The fact was undeniable.

While preparations were being made in Belfast for Lord Salisbury's deferred visit, the first clauses of the second Home Rule Bill were being slowly carried through Committee. On the declaration of the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, Mr. Gladstone had to admit that there was no power to enforce this supremacy. This was indeed in reply to Sir Henry James's second amendment to the second clause a very significant admission. The preamble with all its prohibitions was in fact virtually acknowledged to be merely words with no practically legal force. It had for some time been stated in the newspapers that Mr. Gladstone had undertaken to alter the most important section of the ninth clause, providing that the eighty Irish members who were to sit in the House of Commons at Westminster should vote only on Imperial questions. It was, it was said, to be altered so as to permit them to vote on all English and Scotch matters. But at Whitsuntide, when Lord Salisbury did visit Belfast and Londonderry, only two of the clauses had passed, and it was quite impossible to conjecture what form the measure would ultimately assume.

On the following Tuesday the Marquis of Salisbury arrived in Belfast by the Stranraer and Larne route, with the short sea passage. Thus the journey through Dublin was avoided. A great change in fact had occurred with respect to the routes to and from London. What had formerly been thought the favourite one, the

mail route by Dublin and Holyhead, was no longer generally used by the people of Belfast and the North of Ireland. They preferred their channel services from and to Belfast, and the short sea passage by Larne and Stranraer, to which a small subsidy had recently been granted for the conveyance of the Northern Irish mails.

Lord Salisbury was of course enthusiastically received. His visit, however, was in some measure an anti-climax to that which Mr. Balfour had paid at Easter. Such an organised procession of more than a hundred thousand people, and indeed nearly a quarter of a million if the people outside the regular procession were taken into account, had scarcely been before seen, as the representatives of the metropolitan press declared, even in London. That procession had really been intended for Lord Salisbury: it could scarcely be repeated in the course of a few weeks. But at Larne, at the railway station in York Street, and in all the principal thoroughfares through which he was driven, he received a most gratifying welcome. The Ulster Reform Club, of which the balconies were again crowded with ladies and the members, was especially pointed out to Lord Salisbury by his host, the Marquis of Londonderry. As has been said, the club was begun in 1880, by the Ulster Liberals, to celebrate Mr. Gladstone's great triumph at the general election. It might still be regarded as an Eighty Club, with far more propriety than the Eighty Club in London; for it had remained true to the Unionist principles Mr. Gladstone himself

then professed, and had not become like the metropolitan, a Home Rule one.

A great public meeting in the Ulster Hall, on the second evening of Lord Salisbury's visit, was of course attended by all the prominent Unionists of Ulster, Liberal and Conservative. Between them there appeared to be no difference whatever. Lord Salisbury's speech, though very firm on the duty of the Ulster Unionists having nothing to do with any scheme of government represented by what he called such a crazy Home Rule Bill, was not at all of an inflammatory character. From a Unionist point of view it was reasonable and moderate. Mr. Gladstone had recently apologised for the lawlessness of the Land Leaguers and other Nationalists who, as members of Parliament, he had himself imprisoned, with the plea that the iron had entered into their souls. Lord Salisbury's speech was contrasted with such a poor excuse for illegality and disorder made for men who were calling on the Government, while professedly opposed to coercion, to prosecute the Unionists for their warnings of resistance in the event of a Home Rule Act being forced on Ulster, and especially to prosecute the principal Unionist statesmen, including Mr. Balfour, the Duke of Devonshire, and the Marquis of Salisbury himself, for presuming to go to Ulster at all on the invitation of their political friends.

Lord Salisbury was descended from the second son of Queen Elizabeth's great minister, and that son himself, as James the First's minister, was the official author of the great Ulster plantation scheme. This was

considered to give the marquis a hereditary interest in the province. With regard to that Ulster settlement Hume's words were quoted: "Such were the arts by which James the First introduced humanity and justice among a people who had been buried in the most profound barbarism. Noble causes, much superior to the vain and criminal glory of conquests, but requiring ages of perseverance and attention to perfect what had been so happily begun." [1] It never occurred to Hume, it never occurred to any British minister before Mr. Gladstone when beyond even his grand climacteric, that Ireland should be given up to those who regarded the Ulster settlements as great wrongs, that even the prescription of nearly three centuries was not to be considered sufficient in favour of British people whose ancestors had been established in what was considered a bleak and almost barren province on the faith of the English Government. This aspect of the Home Rule question Lord Salisbury in the spirit of his ancestors has always kept in view.

The next day the marquis received an imposing series of addresses presented by deputations in the Ulster Hall. These were nearly eighty in number, and from all parts of Ireland, including "rebel Cork." They were all representative, and showed, as he stated, the depth of feeling in favour of the Union among nearly all who had anything to lose. These addresses, only one of which was read, took an hour and a half in delivery. The deputations filled the great body of the hall, and in succession the members

[1] Hume's *History of England*, close of chapter xlvi.

ascended the platform, and, filing before Lord Salisbury, left on the opposite side. After luncheon with the Lord Mayor in the afternoon, the Conservative Unionist leader started by the Northern Counties Railway for the ancient city of Derry, which had been far out-stripped in its progress by Belfast, but which had historical associations of the most impressive character.

In Derry the welcome which Lord Salisbury received was enthusiastic. A curious proceeding had, however, taken place. At the Imperial Hotel and other hotels the Union Jack had been displayed. On the plea that it was a party emblem, and therefore could not legally be raised on a licensed house, it was ordered to be taken down by the police authorities. This caused great indignation, and might have produced serious consequences. It was said that the order must have been given from Dublin by Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule officials, who thus wished to put a slight on the Unionist statesman. It seemed strange that in Nationalist demonstrations the green flag with the harp but without the crown should generally be displayed as a matter of course, and that in Londonderry strong objections should be taken during this exceptional time to the Union Jack as a party emblem, even on an hotel.

Mr. T. Healy, in anticipation of Lord Salisbury's visit to the North of Ireland, said that it would produce bloodshed. There was no bloodshed. Neither in Belfast nor Derry was there any collision between parties, any violence whatever. It was very different in Cork, where Mr. Healy's spectacles had been knocked

nearly into his eyes by an enraged Parnellite almost in Mr. Morley's presence; and, as has been said, both Parnellites and Anti-Parnellites had only been saved from each other by the vigorous action of the police. Even *Punch* so far forgot itself as to represent Lord Salisbury during this visit as a Minstrel Boy walking along the road to Belfast, twanging a harp and singing the wretched doggerel, "I'll harp wild war from sea to sea, Ere the Loyalists stoop to slavery." Lord Salisbury, it was justly answered, did not harp wild war in Belfast, and the comic artist and poet, while ascribing to him such words as "One sword at least thy rights shall guard," had forgotten to provide him with any sword or even with a shillelagh.

Published anticipations of probable bloodshed by Nationalists did not render it easier to keep the peace during the visits of eminent Unionist statesmen to Ulster. They had very much the appearance of suggesting what they appeared to deprecate, after the character of the well-known words "Don't nail his ears to the pump." But I can state emphatically, and without any fear of contradiction, that even at such an exciting time the visits of the Duke of Devonshire, Mr. Chamberlain, Sir Henry James, Mr. Balfour, and the Marquis of Salisbury all passed off in peace, with the utmost order, with the apparent goodwill and certainly with the forbearance of all sections of the population. They who might have wished to produce disturbances were apparently awed by the determined and enthusiastic spirit displayed by the great majority of the Ulster people in Belfast and in the other loyalist

districts. During none of these visits was there any collision between opposing mobs, any disturbances whatever; and so far as I know, and I had the best means of knowing, not a single head was broken.

After his Derry visit Lord Salisbury spent two quiet days at Glenarm Castle. He was the guest of the Earl of Antrim, whose brother, the Hon. Schomberg M'Donnell, was and still is his private secretary.

During his stay he had allowed it very plainly to be understood that the House of Lords would throw out the Home Rule Bill, which was slowly making its way, clause by clause, through the House of Commons. In the interminable discussions of those various clauses and sections of clauses there was much that was purely academical; in them all there was a sense of unreality. Amendment after amendment was proposed; but it could scarcely be said that much interest was excited by many of the debates. Mr. Gladstone had singularly enough astonished the Unionist commercial deputations by telling them that in his judgment, according to the financial part of the measure, the new Irish Government would have a plethora of money. The statement was ridiculed, and it soon appeared not without reason. It was discovered that nearly two-thirds of the surplus of £500,000 which was to set the Irish Administration up in the world had disappeared. There had been a miscalculation of £300,000. A new financial scheme had to be prepared, which also gave very little satisfaction, and which, like other important proposals, was never permitted to be thoroughly discussed.

The closure began to be systematically used to get the Bill through the House of Commons by any means. Mr. Gladstone had gone up from Hawarden after the Whitsuntide holidays, with the declaration made at Chester that "a majority was a majority." It was at once conjectured that he would attempt to force through by the closure what was every day seen more plainly to be a revolutionary and impracticable Bill. He moved and carried that the Committee should limit the time for the discussion of groups of clauses, and that it should also not continue beyond the end of July. Such tactics, if tactics they are to be called, did not improve the temper of the members on either side. Even before the ninth of thirty-seven clauses of the Bill was reached, there was something like a free fight, blows being by members very vigorously exchanged. To this the House of Commons, of which it had been the boast that it was so orderly and decorous an assembly, had come!

Nor was this the worst. The Government set the example of what has been called sharp practice which could only be considered worthy of an inferior class of attorneys. When the error in the financial scheme was discovered, Mr. Gladstone very soon framed another. But what was to be done with the ninth clause, referring to the retention of the eighty Irish members in the House of Commons, remained a secret until that clause was reached. He then, on Wednesday afternoon, the 12th of July, announced the abandonment of what had been called the "in-

and-out system," with the third and fourth sections. The Irish members, for six years at least, were to vote at Westminster on all English and Scotch questions. The Prime Minister did not state that he and his colleagues approved of the change. All he said was that the third and fourth sections could not be carried. On the next evening, with very little discussion, this great alteration, which as Mr. Chamberlain said, as he had said of the former Bill when the exclusion of the Irish members was given up, made the measure a new one, was carried by two divisions, one on the striking out of the sub-sections by a majority of twenty-seven, and the other for the amended clause by twenty-nine. Mr. Gladstone plainly stated that he had previously not answered Mr. Chamberlain's questions for information on the new project of the Government, "because he knew his intention and was determined to defeat it." The cynical audacity of this remark surprised the House. "Yes," said Mr. Chamberlain, "he was determined to defeat it: but how? By allowing the House of Commons and the country to be deceived."

It is painful to dwell on this subject. The climax with respect to the second Home Rule Bill, which had become a third one, had now been reached. It was an essentially different one from that which Mr. Gladstone had introduced. It differed, too, fundamentally from the Bill of 1886. The Ministers had evidently given up all expectation of carrying the measure through the House of Lords,

and had therefore become indifferent as to what new provisions might be inserted. From this time the discussion of the remaining clauses may be said to have lost all practical interest. One after another, so far as they related to the old financial scheme, had to be withdrawn, and others which were more or less retained were pushed forward by the majority which the Prime Minister had said was a majority.

The tremendous effect of allowing the Irish representatives with a Parliament of their own voting in the House of Commons at Westminster on all questions, scarcely requires to be pointed out. Mr. Gladstone was good enough to say in a letter which was published at the time, that it might be well to depend on the good feeling of the Irish Nationalist members not to use in any unfair manner the power the Bill would, as amended, give them, while having a domestic Parliament of their own, in voting on British measures. Such a statement as this, though made by a Prime Minister of Mr. Gladstone's long experience, it seemed scarcely possible to take seriously. It was ludicrous. Even before the concession was made of allowing the Irish members to vote on all subjects, one of the most prominent of those Nationalist representatives had publicly boasted that with the in and out process, or the limitation of them to vote only on Imperial matters, they would use their power to control all legislation and all policy by dictating to any British ministry which would depend on their votes.

This was said in the plainest terms. That if the

measure had passed the House of Lords such a course would have been pursued, no man, woman, or child, who knew what the Irish Nationalist members were, and what they boasted of being, could for a moment doubt. They would have voted on Imperial questions and on all British questions as Irish questions, and thus bargained with tottering Governments for their support at the price of getting rid of the utterly illusory guarantees, such as they were, for the protection of the Unionist minority. Not only the assertion of the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament had Mr. Gladstone early in Committee admitted to be valueless, but even on the clause, prohibiting the establishment of denominational schools and colleges with the taxpayers' money, he acknowledged that such institutions where there was no compulsion could be set up by an Irish Parliament. Where the Bill said No! it was by himself interpreted to mean Yes! Mr. Davitt had significantly said that the written clauses of the measure were not half so important as the unwritten clauses. The unwritten clauses would be interpreted by the Irish Nationalist majority in College Green and at Westminster, and they would be held to mean nothing less than complete legislative and national independence in Ireland. The right of voting on all questions at Westminster was an all-powerful lever which the men in whose hands it was intended to [illegible] very well know how to use for their own [illegible] national [illegible] not British objects.

This they did not pretend to [illegible]

question they were beyond being hypocrites. Denouncing coercion as they professed to do, before the final clauses of the measure were reached they allowed it to be unequivocally understood that they were under the Bill, if it became law, prepared to coerce Ulster. This was evident when the thirtieth clause came to be considered for constituting the Royal Irish Constabulary and the Dublin Metropolitan Police local police forces in accordance with the sixth schedule. Mr. Sexton moved that the word local should be struck out. When asked by Mr. T. W. Russell if his amendment was not intended for a centralised police force which might be used against the Ulster Unionists, he did not give the imputation a denial. He virtually implied it to be correct by stating that both Mr. Russell himself and Mr. Balfour had been inciting Ulster to disorder. Mr. Gladstone acted as he had done whenever the Nationalists raised objections to proposals in the Bill. He said that Home Rule of course meant local government, and therefore the local management of the police. But he added in direct contradiction to the clause that "in the opinion of the Government it would be perfectly safe to leave the Irish Legislature to determine how far the police should be local, and how far it should be central." Perfectly safe to do what the clause said was not to be done! Here again where the Bill said No! the Prime Minister maintained that the Irish Legislature in its discretion might say Yes!

On the report stage, too, the Prime Minister posi-

tively refused to agree to an amendment to the effect that the Queen's prerogative in assenting to or rejecting Bills should be exercised on the advice of the Imperial Government. He stated almost to the last that he and his colleagues had not made up their minds as to the retention of the property qualifications for the election of the Legislative Council, which he had represented as a protection to the minorities. He refused in any manner to deal with the anomalies of the second schedule, which Sir Charles Dilke declared to be most unfair, and which could scarcely have been accidental. The provision that if the Imperial Parliament did not deal with the Irish land question in three years it was to be left to the Irish Parliament was a mere makeshift, in direct contradiction to what Mr. Gladstone and Lord Spencer had said when they proposed the Land Bill which they declared supplementary to the first Home Rule Bill seven years before. The difficulty in dealing with that question had been increased by the Prime Minister's recent opposition to carrying out a comprehensive system of land purchase, which assumed such gigantic proportions in his former Home Rule scheme.

In moving the third reading of the Bill on a Wednesday afternoon, August the 30th, the Queen's veteran Prime Minister threatened Parliament with the prospect of Irish Home Rule being made an international question. Such words, if they had any meaning, appeared to suggest the interference of foreign Powers with the domestic affairs of the United Kingdom, such an interference as no independent State

could permit, such an interference as the comparatively humble kingdom of England never would have submitted to when Queen Elizabeth bade defiance to Parma and Spain, such an interference as Edmund Burke deprecated as the greatest evil which could befall a country, and from which, in the time of the French Revolution, we, he declared, were happily free. Mr. Gladstone's language was in melancholy contrast with that of Macaulay when, speaking as a member of the Liberal party in 1845, in reply to O'Connell, he said, amidst the loudest cheers, on this very question of the Repeal of the Union, that he and that great historical connection never would consent to it: "Never though the country should be surrounded by dangers as great as those which threatened her when her American colonies and France and Spain and Holland were leagued against us, and when the armed neutrality of the Baltic disputed her maritime rights; never though another Bonaparte should pitch his camp in sight of Dover Castle; never till all has been staked and lost, never till the four quarters of the world have been convulsed by the last struggle of the great English people among the nations."[1]

Mr. Gladstone's recent and sudden devotion to Irish Home Rule had certainly led him very far. It was yet even to lead him farther. At any other time it would have been thought most extraordinary that Ministers and their supporters should cheer to the echo when the announcement was made that the third reading of such a measure had been carried

[1] Speech in the House of Commons, April 23rd, 1845.

by so small a majority as thirty-four. Such, however, was the case. In the following week on Tuesday, September 5th, in the House of Lords, the rejection of the Bill on the motion for the second reading was proposed. The Duke of Devonshire presented a petition against the Bill from the Ulster Liberal Unionist Executive Committee. It declared that they had always been Liberals, but deprecated such a measure as most dangerous to Ireland. After a four nights' debate, as is very well known, the measure was defeated by, under the circumstances, the unprecedentedly large majority of 378. The smallness of the minority, only forty-one, was also phenomenal. To represent the peers who threw out the Bill as merely Tories, as has since been done, is contrary to the plainest facts. That majority was made up in no inconsiderable proportion by peers who had always been Liberals, and many of whom were hereditary Liberals, and by others who owed their peerages to Mr. Gladstone himself, who had long been his political followers and his personal friends, and who had far more claim to independence than twenty out of the forty-one supporters of the measure.

On the Friday night, September 8th, when the news of the defeat of the Bill by such a majority was received in Belfast, the streets were thronged with excited people. The newspaper offices were again besieged, and when the numbers were posted up cheer after cheer rent the air. Bonfires had been prepared in the purely Orange districts, and they were soon all in a blaze. The streets at one in the morning were as light as if

it had been day. Wiser than when the bonfires were stamped out after the defeat of the former Home Rule Bill, the police did not interfere with them, and they were permitted to burn themselves out. No finer body of men than the Irish police exist. But they have a rough and ready way of dealing with mobs provocative of much antagonism. At two in the morning, in going home, I intentionally passed through the purely Orange district of Sandy Row and found the people still standing round the bonfires but not at all in any aggressive attitude. The utmost good humour prevailed. The next day and the following Sunday there were large crowds of people marching through the streets. Some shots were exchanged and some windows broken by both sides; but on the whole nothing serious occurred. In Londonderry and all the other Ulster towns, excepting Lurgan, there was similar forbearance. Nothing which could be called a riot occurred.

During the autumn the Unionists of Ulster continued to render complete their defensive organisation. Unionist clubs which were not, whatever they might as was said become, Rifle clubs were formed in all parts of the country, and, under the direction of Lord Templetown, were, as has been stated, placed in correspondence with Unionist Associations in Great Britain. The Central Assembly of the Ulster Defence Union held their first meeting. The six hundred members had been returned to it by the enrolled Unionists of Ulster with the mandate to declare their policy and direct their defence, in the event of a Parliament in

Dublin being set up. The Assembly chose their forty representatives who, acting with the Unionist Ulster members of both Houses of Parliament, constituted the Executive Council. Of this Council Mr. Sinclair was elected Chairman. When the House of Commons again assembled after a six weeks' adjournment little interest was taken in the proceedings. One subject had for months preoccupied the public mind, and among the Unionists of Ulster it was scarcely possible to care for any other.

The time came for the Duke of Devonshire to pay the visit he had promised in the spring. This visit had been deferred out of deference to the Marquis of Salisbury and the Ulster Conservatives; but it was well understood that it would take place in the month of November, which had now arrived.

This was the third of the duke's public visits to Belfast. As we have seen, the first was paid in the October of 1885, when as the Marquis of Hartington he appeared as Mr. Gladstone's representative and his expected successor in the leadership of the Liberal party. At his second visit he was the leader of the Liberal Unionist party in the House of Commons, and for the stand he had taken in opposition to Mr. Gladstone and those Liberals whom he had carried with him to Irish Home Rule, he, still however as Marquis of Hartington, was most cordially received by the [illegible] Unionist party, Liberal and Conservative. [illegible] as Duke of Devonshire, came to Belfast with [illegible] tional distinction of having [illegible] the rejec[illegible] the

Home Rule Bill on the proposal for the second reading in the House of Lords.

The Duke and Duchess travelled to Belfast by the Stranraer and Larne route. They were, of course, well received by the Larne Town Commissioners, whom the duke complimented on the very efficient service by the short sea passage. He made one remark in return for the compliment he met with as having moved the rejection of the Home Rule Bill. He could scarcely, he said, have expected that while one half of the people were delighted at the defeat of the Bill, the other half would remain in a state of profound indifference at its rejection. Mr. Morley at Manchester had just discovered that the Duke of Devonshire had been present at some meeting in the Pomona Gardens where a resolution had been passed against the House of Lords. But no person ever imagined that the duke was in favour of the abolition of the hereditary assembly, any more than Mr. Bright, who was also present, and who like the duke had probably not previously seen the resolution, could be. They had both continued Liberal Unionists, and Mr. Bright had died a Liberal Unionist.

During these three days' visit to Belfast, the Duke and Duchess were the guests at Redburn of Mr. R. G. Dunville, whose son continued to be the duke's private secretary. There was a Liberal Unionist banquet given to his Grace in the Ulster Hall, and on the following evening a large public meeting in the same hall under the arrangement of the Convention League. At the banquet Colonel Saunderson spoke. Able as

his speech was it had about it a "No Popery" flavour. I ventured afterwards to intimate so much, but with all respect to the gallant colonel, in the duke's presence. "How many Catholics were at the dinner?" he asked. "Not many: perhaps not more than three." "Well then?" the colonel added. Not wishing to carry the controversy further, I said no more. The question, however, really was not one of the few Catholics who were present, but of the many who were absent, and who had remained Liberal Unionists.

On Saturday, November 11th, before the Duke and Duchess returned to England, a luncheon was given to him by the President of the Ulster Reform Club. There was also a consultation with the Executive of the Liberal Unionist Committee on Irish political affairs in general, and also a private conference with representative members of the Ulster Land Committee on the question of compulsory land purchase, which the Unionist tenant farmers continued to regard as affording the only permanent and satisfactory solution of the Irish land question. The duke listened with deep attention to the representations made to him, and his remarks on Irish land purchase appeared to give satisfaction. The subject, indeed, required to be touched somewhat delicately. He asked the representatives of the Land Committee to produce a plan for land purchase.

The last of the Duke of Devonshire's three political visits to Belfast was especially agreeable. During it there had not been a dissentient voice. It was felt

by the members of the Ulster Reform Club that Mr. R. G. Dunville deserved some special recognition for the manner in which he had received and entertained the duke and duchess as his guests. Some delay occurred through the death of the President before the members generally could arrange for a house dinner in Mr. Dunville's honour. It took place on a memorable evening, that of Friday, the 2nd of March, when it had become known that Mr. Gladstone had left London for Windsor to lay his resignation before the Queen.

An announcement of his intending retirement had been made on the 24th of January during his absence at Biarritz. But it had been apparently even officially contradicted. On the 1st of March, in advising the House of Commons to accept the last amendments of the Peers to the Parish Councils Bill in order to save at least one measure from the wreck of the session, Mr. Gladstone concluded his speech by a vehement denunciation of the House of Lords. It took all parties by surprise, and especially as delivered at the time it was. Rumours of his resignation of the Premiership were abroad, but the speech formally announcing the fact had not been expected to be delivered until the following Monday. On that day the Parliament was prorogued. The Queen's Speech, which closed the longest session on record, was, under the circumstances, the shortest ever known. Credit was taken for the passing of the Parish Councils Bill, though Mr. Gladstone had made the treatment of it by the Peers a ground for his declaration of war against

that time-honoured aristocratical institution, of which he had formerly been one of the most eloquent defenders.

A great career had at last closed. The Duke of Devonshire was the first public man who spoke of Mr. Gladstone's retirement and pointed out its moral. This was at Yeovil on Tuesday, the 6th of March. He alluded to his old friend and leader as having left the Irish question as a legacy hanging round the necks of his party, or like the Old Man of the Sea on their back, as a burden from which they could not, if they would, escape. But, as though this were not enough, Mr. Gladstone had complicated the question with Home Rule all round, and had finished up by declaring war against the House of Lords. This was an appalling legacy for the veteran statesman to leave his party. That party had staggered under the weight of Irish Home Rule, but he had added to it additional obligations under which it seemed almost impossible even to stand.

In this a political and ministerial career of sixty-two years had ended. Fifty-five years before Mr. Gladstone had been declared the rising hope of the Tories. Shortly afterwards, as Vice-President of the Board of Trade, he began to experimentalise on the tariffs, and to gradually surrender those Protectionist principles with which he entered office. It was the beginning of many recantations, of many conversions. The poet has said that men may rise on stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things. Mr. Gladstone has gone from one stepping-stone to

another, leaving his dead self far behind: whether, however, he may have reached higher things in Home Rule, the disestablishment of Churches in Great Britain, and the virtual abolition of the House of Lords, may at least be regarded as open to doubt. He who had been the friend of Peel and of Aberdeen, who had rebuked Mr. Bright for not showing so much reverence for the past as might be desirable in a free trader and Parliamentary reformer, left the House of Commons with a war-whoop against the House of Lords. This seemed strange, and even to some of those who had loved and honoured Mr. Gladstone, painful and almost unaccountable. A gentleman in Belfast, who had often declared the venerable statesman to have lost his judgment ever since he became an Irish Home Ruler, said to me on the day after the delivery of what turned out to be the farewell speech in the House of Commons: "Surely you will now admit that your old idol wishes to politically expire amid a blaze of all the great institutions of the country: first the Union; then the British Churches; now the House of Lords." Mr. Gladstone, to those who had to leave him on Unionist principles, to which he had once been so devoted, did in this, the last scene at the close of his political career, appear to doom to destruction one at least of the great Estates of the Realm which may be regarded as the outstanding bulwark of the throne, of that venerable monarchy which has so long been the keynote binding the arch of all the other great institutions of the Kingdom and of the Empire. Whether in taking the course he thus did

at the very last moment he may be said to have politically departed in a blaze of glory or only in a blue flame it will be for posterity to decide, as well as to sit in judgment on his long political career. We may thus take leave of him and it in the well-known words :—

> **The evil that men do lives after them :**
> **The good is oft interred with their bones.**

CONCLUSION.

SOME concluding pages, which will be more or less a repetition or summing up after so long a narrative, may not be thought superfluous. This book began with Mr. Gladstone's entrance on the leadership of the House of Commons after Lord Palmerston's death. At that time, by a somewhat remarkable coincidence, I undertook editorial duties in Ulster, which may be said ever since to have kept my mind fixed on the Irish problem. When this narrative was entered on, more than five years ago, I had indeed no suspicion that, as it began with Mr. Gladstone as the leader of the House of Commons contemplating a course of Irish reforms, it would end with his retirement from political life, with this Irish problem still unsolved, and with other great and revolutionary questions added to it, proposing to alter and even fundamentally destroy the British Constitution. The uncontrolled supremacy of a single chamber acting through a majority however small is at least not the principle of our Constitution, nor indeed of almost any other.

For the disestablishment of the Irish State Church as undertaken by Mr. Gladstone a great deal could be said. It was at least a recognised Liberal policy.

Some Liberal leaders indeed shrank from the task, and were, like Lord Russell in his old age, strongly in favour of the policy of levelling up, or of concurrent endowment. The time for such a system of what was called "Equivalents," as proposed by a clever Belfast gentleman in *Macmillan's Magazine*, had passed. As has been shown, the Ulster supporters of disestablishment were actuated by the hope that "it would promote the unity and peace of Ireland, the unity and peace of the United Kingdom." On a Home Rule principle, on the principle of giving Ireland a domestic Parliament, and other domestic Parliaments to Scotland, Wales, and parts of England, as Mr. Gladstone has since repeatedly avowed, disestablishment would have scarcely found any supporters among the Protestant Liberals in the North of Ireland. Admitting that this measure, which was altogether exceptional, has done good to the disestablished Church itself by making it independent, earnest, and self-reliant, many of those who favoured that policy have had regretfully to admit that it has not been, from the point of view of the State, so beneficial. It severed bonds for which nothing satisfactory has been substituted, and it was no sooner carried out than it was met with the Nationalist cry that there is no such thing as political gratitude. When Mr. Gladstone left office for ever, he had still not a single Irish member of Parliament who declared himself his supporter, and all the recently professed devotion of the Irish Nationalists to himself personally had not induced them to find a seat for one of his Irish law officers.

The successive Land Acts were doubtless as well intentioned as the Irish Church Act. Some such legislation was a necessity; it could not have been avoided. But it also, it must be confessed, did not realise Mr. Gladstone's expectations. The measure of 1870 had to be succeeded by that of 1881. The principle of double ownership may be said to have been legally sanctioned; but without in any way satisfying the Irish Nationalists, who as Home Rulers under Mr. Isaac Butt organised themselves immediately on the disestablishment of the Irish Church, and who, when Mr. Parnell became their leader, avowedly used the land question as a means for carrying out Irish Nationalist independence. Mr. Parnell can scarcely be said to have ever called himself a mere Home Ruler. He went much further even in words, and was prepared to go much further in deeds. So are the men who now call themselves Parnellites and Anti-Parnellites. They have no power of commanding, controlling, nor directing events. Professing to lead, they are at all times compelled to follow. Even when the Irish House of Commons was purely Protestant, and with but a nominal representation, it differed from the British Ministry and Parliament in 1788 on the question of the Regency. The Legislature and large sections of the people diverged more and more as the French Revolution proceeded and developed, until the Act of Union became the only alternative to civil war and anarchy.

To this fact, since Mr. Gladstone and those who became Irish Home Rulers with him early in 1886

deliberately shut their eyes. Four years before the outbreak of the French Revolution, it was reported in Ulster newspapers that some of the Irish Volunteer Corps contemplated addressing the French Government. With all due respect to Mr. Gladstone, the British statesmen who had to carry out the Act of Union, Mr. Pitt, the Duke of Portland, the Earl Spencer of that day, and Lord Cornwallis, had the most upright and patriotic intentions, and there was no more of blackguardism in the manner that measure was carried than in that by which it was opposed.

Edmund Burke's name has been quoted on both sides with respect to the Union. As has been shown, Mr. Gladstone has assumed that Burke would have agreed with his Irish Home Rule views so recently adopted. So at least I understood the menacing finger, and "Your Burke, your Burke, you know." In his first and more elaborate letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe, the great statesman and philosopher stated that he had not formed any decided opinion on the question, but he clearly implied that Union without Catholic Emancipation would be quite impracticable. This much may be granted. Further than this no person who is fully acquainted with Burke's life can be prepared to go. Even if he had been opposed to the Act of Union when it was carried, it would not have followed that he would have been in favour of its repeal nearly a century afterwards, nor of other revolutionary proposals now associated with the setting up of domestic Legislatures for the different parts of the United Kingdom, the disestablishment of the

Protestant Churches by the votes of Irish Catholic Nationalists, and the interference with the constitutional authority of the House of Lords as a recognised estate of the realm. With especial reference to the maintenance of such great institutions he wrote: "I do not like to see anything destroyed; any void produced in society; any ruin on the face of the land."

Earnest as he was at all times for the removal of the Catholic disabilities, he did not regard the Irish State Church nor even possible disestablishment as a great evil. He considered the Church a bond of union with the State. "Whenever," he wrote, "I shall be convinced, which will be late and reluctantly, that the safety of the Church is utterly inconsistent with the civil rights whatsoever of the far larger part of the inhabitants of our country, I shall be extremely sorry for it; because I shall think the Church to be truly in danger. It is putting things into the position of an ugly alternative into which I hope to God they never will be put." [1]

The fact is that Burke, as Mr. Gladstone has altogether overlooked, never was in favour of Irish Nationalism. While the Ulster Liberals have been taunted by the venerable statesman and those who have supported him with not following Burke in opposition to the Union, though he never was really hostile to it, and certainly never would, any more than Charles Earl Grey and his colleagues were, have been in favour of its repeal, it is utterly forgotten that he was thoroughly opposed to the United Irishmen, even

[1] Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe.

when their views were much more moderate than they afterwards became. He desired to separate the Irish Catholics from the Protestants in Ulster who had adopted Paine's notions about the rights of man, and the revolutionary ideas which Wolfe Tone and others had begun to impress on the parliamentary reformers, and Catholic emancipationists in Belfast and the North of Ireland. He called these men, what they undoubtedly became, the Irish Jacobins. They did not disdain the term: they adopted it; they were proud of it. In a direct reply to Burke, certain members of the Northern Whig Club, which was founded about the time he published the "Reflections on the French Revolution," passed a resolution, as has been shown, declaring that they were what he said they were. An address, avowing this fact, was, as was stated, published in their organ the *Northern Star*. The resolution said, in so many words, "We *are* the Irish Jacobins."

To suppose that Burke could approve of an Irish Parliament, elected on a widely democratic basis, is to contradict all his teaching on this question as on others. Mr. Healy, who is generally outspoken, has said that such a Parliament, as soon as it had the power, would even extend the present franchise to manhood suffrage. In what a state Ireland would be when represented by such a Legislature and a Government depending on it, it requires very little foresight or knowledge to comprehend. The last state of the country would be worse than the first. It would be frightful to contemplate. Burke, on the

other hand, in supporting the admission of the Irish Catholic freeholders to the franchise, then so limited, was always careful to show, as in his letters to Sir Hercules Langrishe and William Smith, Esq., that those who might thus be given votes would be comparatively few, and that they could exercise this privilege of representation without any danger to the State.

His idea of a Jacobin Government was a Government independently of the property of the country. Writing of the French revolutionary administrations he said: "The property of the country does not govern it." With his convictions on this subject so fully and so freely expressed, it may be imagined with what astonishment he would have heard Mr. Gladstone, who claimed him as a Home Ruler and Nationalist, declare, in answer to the London bankers and merchants, that henceforth the country ought to be governed, not by the propertied but the non-propertied classes. He would, without hesitation, have stated that a statesman in the highest office, who could use such language to the representatives of great commercial interests, could only be regarded as acting in the spirit of the French Jacobins, whom, to the last hour of his life, he himself so strongly condemned.

The most remarkable letter Burke wrote on the Irish Catholics and Irish Nationalism was to the Rev. Dr. Hussey at the time this Catholic clergyman was engaged in promoting the College of Maynooth. It was on the 16th of May, 1795, when he was broken-hearted from the death of his son, and disappointed in his hopes of Irish Catholic Emancipation, by Lord

Fitzwilliam's recall from the Lord Lieutenancy. Some very strong language, immediately after that retrogressive step, had been used at the meeting of Irish Catholics in Francis Street, Dublin. Burke wrote to Dr. Hussey: "I do not like the meeting in Francis Street. The tone was wholly Jacobinical." He continued: "The language of the day went plainly to a separation of the two kingdoms. God forbid that anything like it should ever happen. They would both be ruined by it; but Ireland would suffer most and first." He added: "It is a foolish language, adopted from the United Irishmen, that their grievances originate from England. The direct contrary. It is an ascendency which some of their own factions have attained here that has hurt the Catholics with the Government." Again, he said: "Ireland, as Ireland, whether it be taken civilly, constitutionally, or commercially, suffers no grievance. The Catholics, as Catholics, do; and what can be got by joining their real complaint to a complaint which is fictitious, but to make the whole pass for fiction and groundless pretext?"

These extracts might easily be multiplied. One of his earliest writings on Irish affairs is the letter to Sir Charles Bingham about a proposed tax on Irish absentee landlords, a project at first not discouraged by some members of the Government in 1773. He laid it down as a fundamental proposition that in the British Parliament the sole right to imperial legislation must reside. "If it be true," he wrote, "that the several bodies which make up this complicated

mass are to be preserved as one empire, an authority sufficient to preserve that unity, and by its equal weight and pressure to consolidate the various parts that compose it, must reside somewhere: that somewhere can only be in England." This was the very principle of the Declaratory Act which accompanied the repeal of the Stamp Act, as advocated by Burke in the first session he sat in Parliament, and was the adviser and ablest supporter of Lord Rockingham's first Administration. His language then, as more than a quarter of a century afterwards, when he was sinking into the tomb, was always the same. The unity of the empire, with the assertion of imperial rights by the Parliament at Westminster, had in Burke always the most earnest advocate.

I may put in a claim to know Burke. I may also, I hope, be excused in maintaining that I have some right to be heard on Irish affairs. I speak as a witness of what I have myself seen and known. Whatever this book may be, it is not the composition of a theorist, of a dreamer of dreams, of one who has had no experience of political affairs, of one who takes his wishes for realities. When Mr. Justin M'Carthy was first returned to the House of Commons, it was said of him that though a professed Irish Home Ruler, he had not been in Ireland, where he was born, for nineteen years. What truth there may have been in the statement when it was made I had no means of knowing. To have asked for information on this subject from the kindly gentleman who is still spoken of as the leader of the Anti-Parnellite party might have been

justly regarded as an impertinence. I may, however, say of myself, that though not born in Ireland, I have now lived in the country, not for nineteen but for more than twenty-nine years, and during all that time have been deeply interested and practically engaged in Irish politics.

I have written, I believe, at least ten thousand articles on matters more or less associated with Ireland. Day by day I have had to watch the progress of events in that country, and especially from the Ulster point of view. For nearly a quarter of a century of that time I have had to read the correspondence sent in to the newspaper which had to a great extent the confidence of the Liberals, and especially of the tenant farmers and the commercial classes, during all the agrarian and Nationalist agitation. Every one with journalistic experience knows what an important department of a newspaper is the editorial correspondence, comprehending not only the letters which may be published, but also those which are put into the waste-paper basket. One who has had to pass through his hands so long this immense mass of correspondence for an Ulster newspaper ought at least to know Ulster. Independently of all other means of knowing the great Northern Irish province, such an experience cannot but be regarded as of the utmost value. For many years the writers of these letters have been unconsciously photographing themselves for the benefit of the editor to whom they were addressed. If the Home Rule British journalists can honestly maintain that they have had

better opportunities than I have so long had of knowing what they have been writing about on Irish matters, and especially on the one great question which may yet convulse the empire, I shall be glad to be informed of their especial qualifications and to do justice to their superior knowledge. I am sorry, however, to say that many of them, in my opinion, know less about Ulster than they do of the Soudan. In the Soudan they may have no partizan prejudices to mislead their judgment, even with very imperfect knowledge; but in Ireland the most extreme partizanship and virulence have been and still are displayed against those who remain true to the principles of the whole Liberal party, as they were until it pleased Mr. Gladstone to make his sudden change at the beginning of 1886.

Intolerance has been combined with the utmost ignorance and the most reckless misrepresentation. It has hitherto been supposed, it has at least been an old-world prejudice, that people ought to have made up their minds on something before they presumed to teach. But we have seen, and we see, those who have changed what appeared to be the most cherished convictions of their party and their lives, reviling others for remaining true to the political creed which not long ago their assailants themselves professed. Never! no, never! has so extraordinary a state of things before been seen in the whole history of British politics. They who have the most need of indulgence show themselves the least indulgent; they who are the most naked are the least ashamed.

To maintain that a majority of the House of Commons, no matter how chosen or how small, has a right to deprive any portion of the Queen's subjects in the United Kingdom of their inherited privilege as British citizens to remain under the direct control of the Parliament at Westminster, would at any other time have been considered monstrous. This is to subject the loyal Ulster people to the tyranny of a virtually disloyal majority. It is to act directly contrary to the principle laid down by Charles Fox, that the tyranny of a majority was the worst of all tyrannies, because it rendered the case of the minority hopeless. The supremacy of a majority, which is now by many people regarded as an unquestionable truth, is only conventional. It is not in the nature of things. Even in the modern Republics something more than a mere majority in a single Chamber is required to alter the Constitution on any important point. They who believe in the comprehensive nature of the English Constitution, as hitherto understood, with its leading principle, the protection of the individual rights of the citizen, are justified in taking their stand on its foundations. When the Ulster settlements were made, there was an implied compact that they who crossed the Irish Sea on what was believed to be a great colonising and civilising mission should not in themselves, nor in their descendants, be abandoned to those who regarded them as intruders, and as enemies. To this day, as has been shown, the Nationalist Press, even in Ulster, even in Belfast, speak contemptuously

of their fellow citizens, to whom the progress of t
prosperous parts of the province is especially owing,
the "Scotch colony."

Threats have been indulged in of upsetting tl
Ulster settlements by the future Irish Parliamen
It has been said, and is believed, though I cann
personally answer for the truth of the statemei
which has been published in the newspaper
that in certain districts and towns in Ulster lo
have been cast by Nationalists for the future pr
prietorship of houses and lands now possessed b
Protestants and Unionists. Neither the first nor th
second Home Rule Bill has been regarded as a messag
of peace, such as Mr. Gladstone's Irish Church Di
establishment Bill and his Land Bill were represente
as being. Instead of uniting the Irish people, Hom
Rule has divided them as they have not been sinc
the removal of the Catholic disabilities. The Pr
testant Home Rulers, so far from increasing in recer
years, have diminished. Some of them, through M
Parnell's influence, were chosen members of Parli
ment for Catholic and Nationalist constituencies. Bu
they are exceptions, and appear as much out of plac
as Mr. Sexton was when he represented, in especiall
favourable circumstances, one of the divisions
Belfast.

The plain, the undeniable truth is, that there a
two antagonistic populations, two different natio
on Irish soil. To speak of one of them only, as
so often done, as the Irish people, is a mischievo
fallacy, a political and social untruth. To put tl

one under the feet of the other, and this is what is meant by governing Ireland by an Irish Legislature and according to Irish ideas, would be a shameful and cruel injustice. Whatever may be pretended, it never would, it never could, come to good. There is no community of feeling, and therefore can be no common citizenship between the two sections of the Irish people. It may be startling to have to admit fully this fact; but facts are not done away with by being deliberately overlooked. Politics as a science, as all true statesmanship, consist in facing facts: to shut the eyes to them is surely to lead to the most serious complications and troubles. In one way or another, sooner or later, they will insist on being recognised.

The Ulster Unionists, Liberals as well as Conservatives, consider that the Government and the Legislature at Westminster have no right to dispose of them without their own deliberately expressed consent. They one and all now disclaim exceptional privileges. But having abolished one ascendency, they maintain that Parliament can have no moral, no constitutional right to virtually substitute another, which would really be an ascendency of ignorance, poverty, and disaffection. No such change has ever yet been made in the history of the world. The revelations of the Parnell Commission, and the judicial condemnation of so many Irish Nationalist members, were, as I have said, read with the deepest interest in Ulster. They only increased the determination of the Unionists to have nothing to do with an Irish Parliament in which such persons would be supreme.

"Are these the men who are to be our future rulers?" was the indignant question put by one Ulster Unionist to another. Since the dissensions in the Nationalist party, and the abuse lavished by the members of one section on the members of the others, the opposition to Home Rule in Ulster of all friends of the British connection has become intensified. So far from diminishing, it has been steadily increasing as time has been rolling on and events have brought with them their lessons. It is not likely to change. It is inveterate; it is a fixed determination.

A gentleman of Belfast, who was a Gladstonian candidate for an Ulster constituency at the general election in the November of 1885, said not long ago, "I am a loyal man. I am a Liberal, as my fathers were; but rather than submit to an Irish Home Rule Parliament and Government, I would prefer absolute separation, and would do everything I could to bring about such a result. If we were thus abandoned by a Government and Parliament bound to protect us, I would become one of the most bitter and irreconcilable enemies of Great Britain and of everything British. There is scarcely anything I would shrink from to show my detestation and scorn of such a shameful surrender of the loyal to the disloyal. I would not hesitate to join an Irish Fenian Republic at once. Besides, to this it would be sure to come, and the Nationalist leaders, such as they are, very well know it." This gentleman, as a Gladstonian candidate, found himself opposed and defeated by both Conservatives and Nationalists.

The dread of anything in the shape of an Irish Nationalist Parliament and Government is general among the Unionists in the North of Ireland. They fully agree with the gentleman whose words have just been quoted. They now, as ever since the Nationalist movement received so powerful and unexpected a stimulus from Mr. Gladstone and the larger section of the Liberal party, make no secret that they would prefer absolute separation from Great Britain to any Home Rule measure that would concede an Irish Legislature in which they would always be hopelessly outnumbered and at the mercy of those who are bitterly opposed to them on every ground which can constitute two distinct communities. Colonel Saunderson, Dr. Kane, and some other Orangemen, have declared themselves opposed to the separate Ulster which Mr. Gladstone, in introducing his first Home Rule Bill, had intimated that, if it were the wish of the Unionist population, he was either in whole or in part not indisposed to grant. But the feeling expressed by Colonel Saunderson and Dr. Kane in the words, "We won't desert under any circumstances our brethren in the South," is not general, and is certainly not sympathised with by the Liberal Unionists and by the commercial classes in Belfast and the North of Ireland.

But on this point it is necessary that no misunderstanding should exist. There is no desire for a separate Ulster, nor part of Ulster. The Unionists one and all say, "We wish to remain as we are. We cannot be better; we should certainly under an Irish

Government and Parliament be much worse." At time when Heligoland was ceded to Germany by British Government, after the people had been allo to give expression to their inclinations on the subj Lord Rosebery was reported as declaring that, i single Heligolander objected to being thus disposed his wishes would be entitled to consideration. single Heligolander ought not, according to L Rosebery, to have his allegiance changed without own consent. This declaration from the noble lord professed Home Ruler, was read in Ulster with ama ment. There were only 2,000 Heligolanders all to The Unionists who object to Home Rule, whi would not in Ireland be to them Home Rule at a amount to considerably more than a million, t indeed, including the Catholic Unionists, at least third of the population, and by far the best third all the elements which, except that of mere numbe can be said to constitute a people. Yet there was intention announced of consulting them on a propos change in their civil allegiance, and indeed in a their political and social relations. It was assum that a bare majority in the House of Commons, which the Irish representation even gave no fair inde of the inclinations of the people, had a right to di pose of the destinies of their fellow citizens at lea as able, as loyal, and as self-reliant as any oth population in any part of the United Kingdom.

The Ulster Unionists believe that this would be scandalous injustice, a gross abuse of representati forms against their constitutional spirit. They sa

that if the Ministry and the Parliament at Westminster think fit to deprive them of the guardianship of the Legislature and the Government as they are, they have no moral, no constitutional right to deliver them over to an Irish Government and Legislature by which they would be regarded and treated as aliens. They know the men with whom they would in such circumstances have to deal, men who would be to a great extent under the influence of a bitterly prejudiced, ignorant, and disaffected populace in the towns south of the Boyne, and of the peasants in the Southern country districts, still more prejudiced and ignorant, and not less disaffected. They ask what they have done to be surrendered to those to whom as citizens they have long been opposed, and to whose ancestors, under the old ascendency, their fathers were by the State itself induced to occupy a somewhat invidious position, a position which was, however, in no respect produced by the present generation, and for which the Ulster Unionists of to-day have and could have no responsibility whatever.

At a house of a friend and neighbour, who is one of the Protestant Home Rulers representing a Catholic and Nationalist constituency, the Ulster Unionists were compared to the Turks who had to give up their arbitrary rule in Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia. There could not be a greater fallacy. The Ulster Unionists are not Turks. They are not a military caste exercising an arbitrary and tyrannical dominion over different races and religions, separated from the great body of the people, and virtually

only encamped on the soil. The Bulgarian Chri
were far the superiors of their Turkish oppr
Between them in fact there could be no compa
The superiority of the recently emancipated
whether Greek or ordinary Christian, could n
disputed. But the superiority of the Unionis
Ireland to the Southern peasants is at least qu
indisputable. Though a great deal has been foo
said about the "Protestant garrison" in Irelan
Unionists, that is those attached to the B
dominion, were never in the ordinary sense a gar
They lived and live in the country; they
formed and perform in it all the duties of citi
they have contributed and contribute greatly
progress; they represented and even now repr
more than at any former time by far the most
gressive factors in the country.

They have had a great deal to do with buildir
the Empire. In India and throughout all our
colonies, they have shown the noblest gove
capacity. They may fairly ask, with Virgil's
danian hero, though in a happier sense, "What
of the world is not full of our labours?" But i
Unionists of Ulster had been even as tyrannica
as incapable of improvement as the Turks we
Bulgaria, and may now be in Turkish Armenia, it w
still be a gross breach of faith in a British Go
ment and a British Parliament to hand them ov
an Irish domestic Legislature and administratio
which, and by the Nationalist majority domin
such a Legislature and Government, their attach

to Great Britain and the British Crown would be regarded as criminal, and their very virtues treated as crimes. Many of the Turks left in Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia declined to enter the military service of the new Government. Hence they have emigrated in large numbers to where they are still a ruling power.

To subject the Unionists of the North of Ireland to the necessity of either becoming rebels or of leaving the country in which they, like their fathers, have done and are doing a great and civilising work, would be shameful. By them who ought at least to know their own affairs best, and to have some voice in them on Liberal or on any equitable political principles, this reactionary step is almost unanimously condemned. On this question there is no difference of opinion between those who in Ulster have always been thought Liberals and the Conservatives and Orangemen. They take their stand on constitutional grounds. They consider that they are asserting the same cause of freedom as the Long Parliament did against Charles I., as their ancestors did against James II., and as the American colonists did against George III. This is their deep conviction, and for it they are prepared to make almost any sacrifices. Their resolution is practically unanimous. It would be most unwise to sneer at it, to treat it lightly, as entitled to no consideration. No change of circumstances, no pretended guarantees can alter this determination. It has been confirmed and intensified by all recent experience.

The Unionists in Ireland are thus at least consistent. Even they who may think them mistaken in their apprehensions of what would be in store for them under an Irish Parliament and Government cannot question their sincerity. It must be remembered too that they amount, when all told, to almost as large a population as Wales, to whom, as to Scotland, it has also been proposed to grant separate domestic Legislatures, to keep the future Irish Parliament in countenance. Every effort is now made to represent as national what ought really to be regarded as provincial, and to accentuate differences among the comparatively small population in the United Kingdom. Queen Victoria may, in one way or another, have within a hundred millions almost as many subjects as the Emperor of China. In India alone she is the Empress of more than two hundred millions of subjects, and they are, very unlike the population of China, infinitely diversified, in manners, races, and creeds. Over them all the Parliament of the United Kingdom may be said to have a certain supremacy which it cannot repudiate. But it is assumed that the people of the two small British islands, who do not yet number forty millions, and who have grown up at least for several generations together, ought to be separated for domestic legislation while having so much in common that they cannot be cut from each other without producing the utmost confusion, contradiction, a solution of political continuity which must give a violent shock to the whole Imperial body. Our ships are on every sea. Our flag is on nearly all

lands. But it is gravely assumed that the British and Irish people cannot meet in one House of Commons and consult together in one Parliament as the Irish and British representatives have done for nearly a century, the Scotch and English for nearly two centuries, and the English and Welsh for a far longer time.

Such a separation would, in my humble opinion and in the opinion of those with whom I have lived for so many years, be most mischievous, reactionary, and ruinous. Even as it is, the House of Commons is not what it was. It has become divided into certain Liberal and Nationalist groups, and recent ministers have had to bring in measures to please them separately instead of acting on the broad lines of imperial and even national policy. Gentlemen when returned to the House of Commons used to pride themselves on being members of Parliament. For them this was enough. Now we have the Irish members, the Scotch members, and the Welsh members spoken of as representing almost hostile nationalities, and far less considerate to one another than they used to be when the great Liberal party was led by Lord Russell, Lord Palmerston, and Mr. Gladstone himself until he went over to Irish Home Rule. Many people, certainly all Unionists, however, believe that, so far from it being an evil that Irish, Scotch, and English measures are discussed in one House of Commons, it is a positive good. In such an assembly the different minorities in each country have a protection which they could not have in domestic Par-

liaments of their own, most certainly not in an Irish Parliament. When sitting together, comparing opinions, and making allowance for differences, a more conciliatory spirit is fostered than there can be in separate legislative assemblies, where prejudices would be intensified, and angularities sharpened instead of being softened down. It is good for all the members to meet together, to deliberate together, to understand one another better, and thus to agree to compromises which often prevent great injustice being done. Family quarrels are often the most bitter of all. They have been and are especially bitter in Ireland. If the people, instead of sending representatives to Westminster, were to have a Parliament of their own, or what would be still worse, such a Parliament and also representation in the British House of Commons, certain to be used under all circumstances for exclusively Irish objects, the inevitable result would be an antagonism, social and political, such as the Union rescued the country from, and was the only alternative to a continuance of the sanguinary civil war of which so very little is said.

Ireland would be too small for the Irish. Then would come true what was said of the Wars of the Roses after France was given up by the English: Cooped up within the narrow limits of their own country the people would turn against one another. Even now the Nationalists are divided into two if not three parties. Among both the leaders and their followers there is the utmost personal animosity, which would

become utterly uncontrollable and savage in a Dublin Parliament. Then Belfast and the North of Ireland would never consent to be governed from Dublin by Irish Nationalists without the least sympathy with them, and with a great deal less than sympathy : with that thoroughly hostile mind which has generally been considered a ground for separation between two populations, but never for forcing them into a close union, independently of the Parliament and Government which would thus give up those who, as Unionists, have on them especial claims for protection.

A great deal that is foolish is talked on this subject. At the house of a relative of Lord Dufferin in Scotland, I was asked if it were not a pity that his lordship should have had to spend so much of his time abroad. He had filled the highest posts outside the British Isles the Government had to bestow. He had been Viceroy of Canada and of India. He had been British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, at Constantinople, and at Rome, and was then as now the representative of the British Government at Paris. Would it not have been better if he had been able under an Irish Parliament and Government to have applied his rare gifts to the service of Ireland ? This question was put with the utmost gravity, and as though it only admitted an answer in the affirmative. It was so absurd that I could not have discussed it without saying things which would scarcely have been polite. I contented myself, therefore, with remarking to my questioner : "When you have the opportunity, you had better ask Lord Dufferin himself

how he would like to serve under an Irish administration composed of the present prominent Nationalists, or their successors who would very likely be worse."

Such an Irish Government, and such an Irish Legislature, by whatever names they might be called, never could have the confidence of the Unionists. Mr. Stead, some years ago, came to the North of Ireland. Having been in different parts of the country, he told me that wherever he had gone he had never met a Catholic opposed to Home Rule. He made this remark as we were on the threshold of the Ulster Reform Club. "Have you not?" I said, "then I will introduce you to one at once." At the very moment Mr. Arthur Hamill, a Catholic magistrate and landed proprietor, was coming down the stairs. "Now," I said, "ask Mr. Hamill what his opinion is on Home Rule."

"I am utterly opposed to it," said this *Belfast* Catholic gentleman.

"Why are you opposed to it?" asked Mr. Stead.

He received the prompt reply, "Because I have too much to lose."

Thus it is. The distrust and alarm which the mere possibility of an Irish Nationalist Government, depending on an Irish Parliament, excites among nearly all who have anything to lose in the North of Ireland, cannot be exaggerated. I have more than once said, and I deliberately repeat, that the Unionists of Ulster would rather be governed by a foreign, a German army, whose headquarters might be Dublin, than by such an Irish Legislature and Ministry the

Home Rule Bills proposed to establish. The commanders of a German army quartered in Ireland would at least be impartial as between the different sections of the people. But there would not be anything impartial in an Irish Home Rule Parliament and Government. They would represent a political and social triumph over their fellow countrymen, whom the Nationalist majority so thoroughly hate, and against whom they would be only too ready to raise the cry of *Væ Victis*. After the last Home Rule Bill was accepted by the House of Commons, a Nationalist newspaper, published even in Belfast, exultingly wrote, "The slaves have become the masters." History tells us what use slaves made of their newly-acquired freedom, especially when they found their former masters left in their power.

The Irish Catholic clergy generally would not indeed voluntarily lend themselves to any intentional injustice towards the Protestants. But as has been previously stated and shown, especially in the reply given to Lord O'Hagan by his friend the Bishop of Limerick, Dr. Butler, the Irish Catholic clergy, including the bishops, except in the matter of education, are driven on from below. They often know very little of what is passing in the minds of their people, especially of the peasants in the South and West. The frightful burning of a wife for being suspected to be a witch in Tipperary only a short time ago, an act of which so many persons were spectators and in which they might be re-

garded as participators, proved what a depth of ignorance and of the most debasing prejudice exists among the peasants who, under Home Rule, would have so many votes for an Irish Parliament. Of such votes it could not be said that they would rise in estimation by being, according to Cicero and the younger Pliny's words, weighed as well as counted. It was remarkable that the Irish Nationalist Press said very little of this witch-burning case. They kept almost a complete silence respecting it, and gave the reports no prominence whatever. Had it occurred among Protestants, or in what are so often represented as "Orange," districts in the North of Ireland, the Irish Nationalist members and their newspapers would have adopted respecting it a very different tone. An eminent Presbyterian clergyman of Londonderry said of this appalling murder: "It could not have occurred among our people under any circumstances. They have now far more sense and knowledge than to believe in witchcraft, and far more humanity and Christianity than to think of burning their wives for witches."

It has been observed of Home Rule: "The national idea lies at the base of the whole question. Ireland is a distinct entity." Now this is just what Ireland is not. There are in Ireland two distinct entities, if not more. Hence the utter impracticability of following the precedents so often quoted and so little understood of Austria and Hungary, and of Sweden and Norway. Just before the great change in a great leader and in the larger section of his party towards

Home Rule, those precedents were often quoted as showing how different nations might have independent legislatures and ministries, and yet combine loyally together under the same sovereign, and for Imperial unity have something of a common administration. In the autumn of 1885, when the object of the Conservative party was undoubtedly to conciliate the Irish Nationalists previous to the general election, even Lord Salisbury was erroneously quoted as referring to Austria and Hungary as examples of the relations which might be established between Great Britain and Ireland. The Marquis of Salisbury is not, never was, and never had the least intention of being, an Irish Home Ruler. Besides, these alleged precedents do not apply at all. There never was a question of placing Ireland towards Great Britain in the same position as Hungary to Austria or Norway to Sweden. It has recently been shown, it is even now being shown, that neither are Hungary and Austria, nor Norway and Sweden, working together at all satisfactorily; that there is much dissension, and that affairs in both of these combinations threaten to come to a deadlock. The Emperor Francis Joseph has made the best of a very difficult position; but he has appeared to be almost at the end of his resources, and forebodings are openly expressed as to what is likely to occur under his successor. Norway and Sweden, too, have found themselves in almost as antagonistic positions as Austria and Hungary. Democratic Norway has recently called out for an independent foreign policy; monarchical Sweden is much more Conservative. Their marriage can

scarcely now be said to be well assorted: it is threatened with a divorce. No well-informed person will now maintain that Hungary and Austria, and Norway and Sweden, afford examples of what might satisfactorily exist legislatively and administratively between Great Britain and Ireland, or among the various nationalities of the British Isles. They afford precedents which, even if they could be carried out, ought to be shunned rather than adopted. Year after year their inapplicability to different sections of the British and Irish people has become more and more manifest. Even the most uncompromising of Home Rulers no longer have anything to say in their favour.

In the North of Ireland some five years ago a different movement was begun. It was not for separation, division, or dismemberment in any sense. It was for not only a political, moral, and social union which may be said virtually to exist on the basis of equal laws; but also for a physical union between the two islands. When Sir Edward Watkin was advocating the Channel Tunnel between France and England, it was asked in Belfast why there could not be a tunnel between the South-West coast of Scotland and the North-East coast of Ireland. Donaghadee and Portpatrick were not separated by more than twenty miles, and further up the distance between the two shores is, as it has been already said—and Mr. Gladstone had been respectfully told—even less. The passenger and mail yachts used to run between Donaghadee and Portpatrick. This was the direct Northern

route, just as Kingstown and Holyhead now represent the Dublin mail route to and from England. It began at last to be seen that not only the sixty miles of sea, which seemed to Mr. Gladstone so formidable, might after all be done away with, but the sea passage dispensed with altogether.

Sir Edward Watkin, when consulted, expressed himself most favourable to the project. Eminent engineers gave equally favourable opinions and drew up plans to show how it could be carried out. Four years ago a public meeting, attended by influential representatives from different parts of Ulster, was held in the Town Hall of Belfast, and the then Mayor, Mr. C. C. Connor, at the time the representative of North Antrim, expressed himself strongly in its favour. So did Sir William Quartus Ewart. Other eminent Belfast merchants fully concurred in the view then taken of the practicability and desirability of the project. A committee, which still exists, was formed to take steps as circumstances might arise to promote this object. It was said that the tunnel might cost six millions, eight millions, or even ten millions. But after all, even the highest sum seemed small in comparison with the great end in view.

At that very time Mr. Balfour proposed in his Irish Land Purchase Act to advance other thirty millions to the Irish tenant farmers to make them the proprietors of their holdings. In addition the money already employed under the Ashbourne and other Acts was also as it came in to be again applied to the same purpose. This made the proposed

advances under the measure to amount to at least forty millions. Mr. Gladstone, in his supplementary Land Bill to his Home Rule Bill in 1886, contemplated advancing ultimately not less than £150,000,000 of public money to buy the Irish landlords out. In comparison with such sums, what could be said against the State giving a guarantee for the cost of the tunnel which would thus unite Great Britain and Ireland? Sir William Q. Ewart showed that the interest would amount to some £350,000. It would make Great Britain and Ireland virtually one country, and give an enormous development to the North American mail and passenger service, which would not be subjected to the drawbacks of the route by Queenstown. It would be doing in one respect what nature had formerly done. Any one who looks at the Mull of Cantyre from the North Antrim shore cannot but see that Ireland and Scotland were there at one time physically united.

Lord Spencer some time ago referred to the tunnel in a rather sceptical manner. "Then you will have the tunnel?" he said. "Oh yes, Lord Spencer," was the reply, "we shall have the tunnel." His lordship had then become a Home Ruler, and did not look on the North of Ireland as he had done when twice representing the Queen as Lord Lieutenant. Sooner or later, unless Ireland is to stand still or become independent of Great Britain, the tunnel will be made: the sooner the better.

Just as these last pages are being written the emi-

nent statistician Mr., now Sir Robert, Giffen has borne his testimony to the practicability and importance of the proposed British and Irish tunnel. He told the Financial Commission in giving his evidence that he fully believed in this project, and that if carried out it would be of immense benefit to both countries, but more especially to Ireland. Sir Robert Giffen believes on this question with the shrewd and practical merchants of Belfast, and the representative men generally of the North of Ireland, as well as with engineers and chairmen of great railway companies.[1]

The tunnel would go far to unite the people of the two islands as no National-Legislature could ever do. Through its means, and through other facilities afforded with State aid for a reduction of the railway fares and rates, if not by the purchase of the Irish railways, which Mr. Gladstone once so much favoured, prejudices would be subdued, the people, being drawn closer to one another, would, it might confidently be hoped, be more attached to one another, and thus taught to respect one another better than they are ever likely to do when appealing to a Nationalism which in Ireland at least means chronic discord and probably internecine strife.

This is my profound conviction. It is a conviction based on the fullest knowledge and experience extending through so many years. In thus expressing it I have had nothing to interfere with an impartial and independent judgment. In thus expressing it I have no personal, no interested object to serve.

[1] See the evidence on Friday, May 3rd, 1895.

As a humble member of the Liberal party and
nected with some of its leaders by acts of kind
and friendship extending over many years, f
selfish motives I had nothing to lose and so
thing perhaps to gain by continuing to act
those who under their great chief so suddenly vee
round to Irish Nationalism, which they had up
that time denounced as foul, bloody, and inc
patible with law, order, freedom, and civilisati
When Edmund Geoffrey Stanley, the fourteenth E
of Derby, quarrelled with the Whig leaders and
nounced them for subservience to O'Connell,
addressed them in Hotspur's well-known wor
asking them if they were prepared to be the b
instruments and second means of the great agitat
for the Repeal of the Union. But we know th
this accusation was unjust. Lord Grey, Lord A
thorp, Lord John Russell, the Marquis of Lansdown
Lord Melbourne, Lord Palmerston, Mr. Macaulay, an
the other recognised chiefs of the Liberal party in th
great reforming days did not descend so low. The
never sacrificed nor thought of sacrificing the Unic
for the support of O'Connell and his band of Repealer
We have very recently had a Liberal ministry ar
party avowedly acting in the spirit and to the letter
Hotspur's taunts to Worcester and Northumberlan
unjustly applied formerly by the great Rupert of deba
to his old colleagues. We have had a Liberal minist
and party contradicting all their former principles ar
acting in defiance of all their loudest professions. W
have had a Liberal ministry and party under th

pretence of Home Rule attempting to govern not only Ireland but Great Britain by Irish Nationalist votes. It is a strange, an appalling phenomenon, which all who ever were considered Whigs or Liberals until this last decade would have regarded as impossible and incredible. Against this most reactionary and degrading system of government, this betrayal of the greatest of public causes and the noblest and most patriotic of duties, these pages are a protest. In them there is a careful recapitulation of facts as they were developed year after year. If the indictment may appear a formidable one, it is at least conscientious, and arises from the facts themselves and from them alone.

The question thus raised will not be settled by the general election which has lately ended so successfully for the Unionist cause. It is sure in one form or another to recur. On it, and on the men who have been engaged in bringing the present unprecedented state of things about, posterity will have to form and express an independent and impartial judgment. It is sufficient now to say that the English people and the loyal and self-reliant Ulster people will never tamely submit to be governed as a conquered race by a combination of English Liberal partisans and Irish Nationalists, and that in their resolution to resist such a fate they will be supported by all the Queen's subjects devoted to the British Empire throughout the world.

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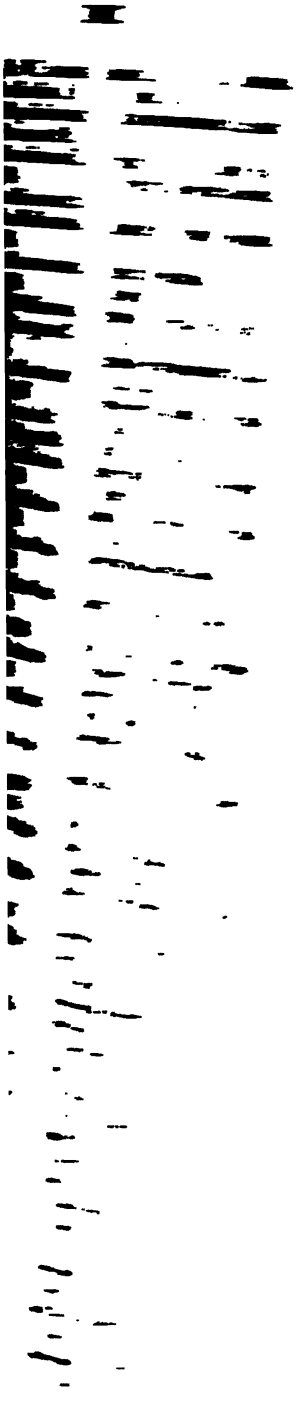

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